

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Sam Uyehara, 76, retired restaurant owner

*"And then I come home, I read the cooking book, eh?
(Chuckles) Just read, then try. Because I get nothing to
lose, that's my own, eh? I try. And then, I catch on
everything like that. Then, things go good. Instead of me
going to cook, I hire more cooks. And then, make them work,
and meantime I working, I watching. I go wash dishes, peel
potato, peel onion, everything. I put about fourteen, sixteen
hours a day."*

Sam Uyehara, Okinawan, oldest of nine children, was born June 12, 1910 in Hilo. Soon after, the family moved to Pepe'ekeo. Uyehara attended Pepe'ekeo and Papa'ikou Schools and completed the eighth grade. He eventually began working as a carpenter's apprentice for Pepe'ekeo Plantation.

In 1928, Uyehara moved to Honolulu and lived in the Sheridan area. He found work as a carpenter for various companies. A year later, he leased property from the Magoon Estate on Makaanoe Lane off John 'Ena Road in Waikiki and built a home.

In 1932, Uyehara started his restaurant on Kalākaua Avenue near Fort DeRussy, on the spot where Ala Moana Boulevard merges with Kalākaua Avenue today. Named Smile Cafe, his restaurant became a popular local gathering place. Smile Cafe remained at that location until 1947, when the City and County extended Ala Moana Boulevard from Kālia Road to Kalākaua Avenue. Uyehara was forced to move his restaurant to Kapi'olani Boulevard near Ke'eaumoku Street, remaining there until 1962 when he decided to retire.

Uyehara and his wife, Miyoko, live in Pauoa Valley. They have five children and six grandchildren.

Tape No. 13-67-1-86

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Sam Uyehara (SU)

March 3, 1986

Pauoa, O'ahu

BY: Warren Nishimoto (WN)

WN: This is an interview with Mr. Sam Uyehara at his home in Pauoa Valley, O'ahu on March 3, 1986. The interviewer is Warren Nishimoto.

Okay, Mr. Uyehara, let's begin by you telling me when you were born and where you were born.

SU: I was born in Waiākea Camp 4, Hilo, June 12, 1910. Then I stayed down Waiākea 4 Camp about five years, I believe, and I went to that school up in 6 Camp not even six months, I believe. Then my father moved to Pepe'ekeo, where they call Maukaloa. It's way on the end of Pepe'ekeo near Honomū. From there on, I went to Pepe'ekeo School which I didn't have no friend at all. Finally, I really liked sports, so I played sports. Then I made a lot of friends.

And then I went to Pepe'ekeo, after two o'clock [p.m.], Japanese[-language] school. Mr. Inouye and Mrs. Inouye used to be the teachers at Pepe'ekeo [Japanese] School. After that, Mr. Inouye quit the school, and Mr. Yamada and Mrs. Yamada took over the Japanese school until I graduate from chūgakkō and kōtōga[kko].

Then I went to English school in Pepe'ekeo till sixth [grade], and Pāpai'kou till eighth.

WN: How come you had to go Pāpai'kou?

SU: Because Pepe'ekeo didn't have seventh, and eighth, and ninth. Then after we finish down there, I didn't go to high school. I went to see Mr. Webster who is the manager of the Pepe'ekeo Plantation Company. Then he asked me if I have any experience in anything. I had no experience, no nothing. I liked to be carpenter. At Pāpai'kou School I went to shop, learn how to be carpenter. So I know how to use the tools. I told that to Mr. Webster. He said, "Okay. You go see Mr. Murakawa." He was the foreman of the Pepe'ekeo Plantation Company carpenters. So he gave me a job, a dollar a day. Six (chuckles) o'clock in the morning till four o'clock in the afternoon.

WN: What did you do, exactly?

SU: Well, the first thing I do is he let me carry the lumber. (Chuckles) All kind of lumber. I clean up everything. Then he gave me one of his saw. You know, the saw, eh? He gave me one. Of course, I bought the saw, hammer, square, and all those things that I need immediately, see. So I don't know how to sharp the saw, I don't know how to sharp the kanna, everything, see. But the saw that he gave me is already fixed, everything, so I use that. Then finally, he teach me how to sharp the saw and everything. I catch on right away. Then I sharp my own saw. The new saw that I bought, I sharp that. But doesn't go straight because (chuckles) don't know how to use the file, see. So I asked him, "How come?"

He tell me, "How much did you file?"

"So and so, so and so."

"No, you should count. Every time when you go on the teeth, four times, you got to go four, four. Every one, four. And then turn around, you go four, four, four. Then you get. Then after you sharp, you get the needle and put the needle. If the needle slice right away, it's okay." That was that. Then before that, I think I spoiled couple of my saws, you know, at the plantation.

Then, hammer, we don't know. So I just bought the hammer. I figure, well, light hammer is better. No, light hammer is no good. Medium-size hammer is good. So every time when you near, you smash your finger, see. (Laughs) Then, same time, when you use the kanna, you don't know how to use the kanna. You know, Japan kanna.

WN: What is that, kanna?

SU: Plane. So he teach me how to fix everything and sharp everything. And then, finally, I bought the toishi. Then I learn. I come home from work, I learn. Every day, I do. Same, over and over. I practice. Finally, I catch on everything better than the ordinary people who go inside there and then learn. So Mr. Murakawa asked me, "Who teach you how to do this?"

"Well," I say, "I go home. I do it over, and over, and over. And after you folks go home, sometimes I used to go down the working place and then see all you folks' tools, how you folks fix up." Because those days, they leave all the tools in one place, nobody steal everything. So I go down there. I go open up, I look, and file. And then, come home, and I do the same thing, the way how they do it.

Then Mr. Murakawa say, "Well, you do this."

So, okay, I do it. And then, after I go home, I do the same thing again. I took my square measure, I measure everything, and I write 'em down. And then he assigned me with a Mr. Shimizu to go to all

different camps to repair. Repair the steps, and then kitchen sink, everything. Most of the . . .

WN: You mean, the houses?

SU: Yeah, houses. The most thing was the steps. But you don't know how to cut steps, you know, the zig-zag kind, eh? So one day I watch Mr. Shimizu doing. So oh, I open up the book. I bought the book. I open up and cut this. Mr. Murakawa look at me, he say, "Where did you learn all this?"

I tell, "Well, I look what Mr. Shimizu doing, and same time I look the book, read the book, and did it."

"Oh, good."

Then he assign me to fix the sink, regular sink, kitchen. Oh, that was easy already because I know the routine already. Then, tell me, "Okay, you graduate this one, so you learn how to do this." So he told me to learn how to nail the floor of the. . . . You know? Then, okay, that is finished. Then the ceiling. Ceiling was hard because you have to look up, eh? Then after you finish that, wall, partition. But you have to open up where the door going to be, so you have to learn how to read the blueprint, see. But blueprint reading is easy. So I did it. And then, after that, he teach me how to put up the window. He told me, "Well, do this, do that, do that." Okay, I did it. One thing help me was that I read the book. You know?

Then after working about couple years at plantation, I decide to myself, well, no sense go ahead and stay in plantation making only one dollar one day. Work so hard, eh? (Laughs) If you work twenty-five days, you get ten cents one day, bonus.

WN: Oh, if you don't get sick, you mean?

SU: Yeah. So you get dollar and ten cents [\$1.10]. But if you work twenty-four days, you don't get the ten cents. Well, those days was big money. So I decide. I tell Mr. Murakawa, "I better quit and go Honolulu."

He told me, "If you go out in Honolulu, you going be furyō shōnen. You going be bum."

I tell, "Well, maybe, maybe not, I don't know but."

"What you going do, Honolulu?"

I say, "I'm going to be carpenter."

"Who you know in Honolulu?"

"I don't know nobody, but Mr. Shimizu"--this is another Shimizu,

see--"I wrote him a letter."

"Well, how did you get the address?"

"Well, I found out."

And then, came with my tools and everything. Those days, the boat, steerage, only four dollar. Ride the boat four o'clock in the afternoon. Six o'clock in the morning, you reach here. Then he was waiting [for] me at the pier. And then, I went. You know the Sheridan Street?

WN: Yeah.

SU: Then used to get Elm Street. The first street when you go down from King Street. When you go down to Sheridan Street, the first street on your left, go down. Then I stayed down there just a night. Then I get up in the morning, I was looking all around. In front is all Chinese rice field and everything. Then I was looking all around the place. I just come across my father's cousin. And he tell me, "Masao?"

I say, "Yeah." I look at him.

He say, "What you doing around here?"

I say, "I came down from Honolulu to work."

He say, "Who you looking for?"

I say, "Looking for you folks."

He say, "My house is here."

(Chuckles) Coincidence, eh? The house is just about, oh, fifty feet away. Maybe more or less, I don't know. So, I went to the house. But he has all three girls. I don't want to stay with the girls, eh? So next day, I ask him where is So-and-so, So-and-so.

He tell me, "You go across the rice field, and then you turn to your left, keep on going. You see certain-certain kind of house."

So I went down there. I met my mother's cousins. Then I moved down there. Because this side only wahines, eh? I don't want to stay with all the three wahines. So after I moved down that place down there, called Uyehara, I stick around about couple days, and then went look for a job. Then finally, I get job down Nekomoto. You know, those days, Nekomoto was a big contractor, Japanese contractor. So I make \$2.75 one day. Boy, that was big money.

WN: Okay, wait. Let me back up little bit now. Tell me something about your father. What did he do?

SU: Well, my father worked at the plantation. They call that the pack mule. Small mule, he drags about four or five. Five. One, he rides. Four, load up the bone meal, and all kind of lumbers and everything, distribute to all of the fields, see. And then, after he come back, you know, they lease land from the plantation and make his own sugar cane, see.

WN: Oh, kompany?

SU: Yeah, yeah, yeah, kompa. (Chuckles) You know better than I do. So after he worked till dark, and then my mother tell me, "Masao."

I say, "Yeah."

She say, "Otōsan yonde kinasai [Please go call your father]."

He doesn't come home till dark, you know. When it comes dark time, I so scared, eh? I don't want to go, see. But I cannot help. I was crying, you know. I was crying, going. And then, from far place, I yell, "Otōsan, Otōsan."

So finally, he came out, say, "Naze?"

I say, "I came call you."

So, came home. And after that, we went to furo, you know the Japanese furo? All plantation, all everybody get together, all go one place, eh? And after that, we have supper. I tell you, my father really worked hard. So I see that, tsk, well, I got to work hard, too. Help him. That's what I did, see. But only get forty dollars a month. How can you feed four or five kids? So he have to work extra work. So, end of the year, when they harvest the cane, the plantation guys come around and cut the cane for him. And then, they charge the expense, and whatever get left, give to him, see. Then, that was okay. But when he sees that, "Well," he say, "we made so much money, so much money, so we got to keep this money for kids to go to school." Well, fortunately, I tell you, we was lucky. All the kids besides me went to high school, see.

WN: What did you do to help your father?

SU: Well, in the morning, I get up, I have my breakfast, and feed the pig. Feed the pig, and then . . .

WN: Your own pig?

SU: Yeah. Feed the pig, and then feed the chickens. And then, go to school. And then after we come back from school, me, I like sports, see. Everybody come home, so I run and come home. I run and come home to finish all the detail that I have to do. You got to feed the pig again, see, and chickens. Then, after I get time, I go in the pasture with all the boys, go play baseball. I do the same thing over and over, day after day, day after day, to help him out.

WN: You were the oldest child?

SU: I'm the oldest one in the family. I have a uncle, my mother's brother, worked at Hilo as a store clerk. So, what he used to do is to come in plantation, our place, once a week to deliver all the goods for who ordered, you know. So we was fortunately lucky because he had a company's car, eh. We goes down his place, weekend sometimes; and come to summertime, we go down his place, go play. Well, I'm too young to work that time. But when I came about, let's see, about maybe twelve, thirteen, I think, I go to plantation, go work. Twenty-five cents or thirty-five cents, I'm not sure, boy, I forget already. Work, you know. All the school kids.

WN: Doing what?

SU: Hoe the grasses.

WN: Hō hana?

SU: Yeah. You know, the cane field, eh? Well, how much can we do? But just kill the time, we go down there. And then when it come to lunch hour, there's no such thing, half an hour. We go place where they get some guava, we go down there pick up guava. Place where they get, what they call, you know the mountain poha, eh? Maybe one hour. The boss doesn't say anything to us because he knows it, eh? But he told us, he said, "Make sure the big boss no catch you." (Laughs) That's what I did.

WN: So you got paid by the day, doing that?

SU: One day, twenty-five cents, pay by the month. (Laughs) That was big money at the time.

WN: What did you do with the money that you earned?

SU: Well, I kept some to go to school to Pāpa'ikou because every day we need ten cents for ride the train and go. Ten cents back and forth, now. And then, we bring our own lunch from home. And then, when we want to eat ice cream, we run from Pāpa'ikou to Pepe'ekeo. Three, four boys get together. "Hey, let's go home. Let's go eat ice cream."

"Okay." We all go, you know. For save five cents.

WN: How far was it?

SU: Oh, about three, four miles, I think. We run, you know, run. But those days, you're young, you're full of fight, eh?

WN: So, how often would you go eat ice cream?

SU: How often? Maybe once a month or so. And then, when we get something at the Hilo fair like Fourth of July, we need money, eh?

So when we go school, we go early in the morning, you know. We walk and go. And come home time, we run. Because in the morning when you run and go, we sweat, everything, no good, eh? But come home time, we don't care, sweat or no sweat. That's what we used to do. But me, fortunately I was lucky because I had my uncle at Hilo. Yeah.

WN: And you stayed with him when you went to the fair?

SU: Yeah. I was really fortunate, I was really lucky, you know.

WN: How did you go to Hilo from Pepe'ekeo?

SU: My uncle, when he comes down and deliver the goods, plantation eh, I go with him that night.

WN: So you didn't have to catch the train to Hilo?

SU: No. And then, when we come home, I used to catch a taxi called Nakao. He used to be taxi [driver] from Pepe'ekeo, Maukaloa, to down Hilo. I used to go down--I know where he park his car, everything, so I go down there, I come home with him. He didn't charge me nothing because kids, eh? (Laughs) But he used to take me to eat chop suey. You know what's the chop suey? Cabbage with pork with rice. Boy, that was a treat!

WN: Where was this?

SU: At Hilo.

WN: Restaurant?

SU: Yeah. Chinese chop suey. (Laughs) That, I never can forget.

WN: How much was the chop suey?

SU: I don't know because I didn't pay anything. Because he paid everything, see.

WN: You know this Maukaloa, this was a plantation or. . . .

SU: That is the plantation. They used to get Mill Camp. Mill Camp is the place where all the mill workers, and all the carpenters, painters, electricians, all, they stay down there, see.

WN: This is Pepe'ekeo Mill?

SU: Yeah. And then, came up to the main highway where Pepe'ekeo Road go down and main highway on the corner, they used to get plantation store. From there on, you go up about, oh, about a mile, go Andrade Camp.

WN: What was that called?

SU: Andrade Camp.

WN: Andrade?

SU: Yeah. Then from there over a couple of miles, you go up in the mountain. That's where Pepe'ekeo Maukaloa was. So, you know, we used to walk to school about, I think, about five, six miles a day, no?

WN: Was it raining and cold?

SU: Raining time, it's. . . . You know what people say? Even though you forget your lunch, don't forget your raincoat and kappa. That much was rain, you know. And then, my mother make me a kappa, and then pants with leggings style with all the abura, everything on so don't leak, and with the hat and everything. There's no such thing, umbrella, because umbrella doesn't last too long. And then, sometimes, I used to get lazy. I used to get sister go school together with me. I told her to go ahead and carry my kappa, and my book, and everything. Me, I go through the cane. Now, when I feel that, oh, I feel sorry, but too late already, eh? But she was a husky girl, see. And then, we chew the cane, four or five boys, eh? We go right inside the cane field. We chew the cane, we come out. We don't want to throw the trash away on the road because the bosses, plantation, going to find out, eh? Yeah, that's what we used to do.

WN: So what you did with the rubbish?

SU: Just leave 'em down there, inside the cane fields, so don't know, eh? But after they cut the cane (laughs), they find out, eh? Yeah, that's what we used to do.

WN: What kind games you folks used to play?

SU: We used to play baseball, volleyball at that time. There's no such thing as basketball, tennis, softball, football, no more. Baseball, volleyball, that's the most thing.

WN: Was it organized or. . . .

SU: Yeah, it's regular organized. And then, we used to get uniform. Below, you know, any kind of pants, but on top we get regular T-shirt with a name on. (Chuckles)

WN: Yeah? Number in the back?

SU: No. No, no. No more number (chuckles) in the back. Even writing, we do our own writing because we don't get money to take the shirt to a shop, write, eh?

WN: What was the name of your team?

SU: Well, my team was Shōwa Maukaloa. (Laughs)

WN: "Shōwa" for the Shōwa emperor [of Japan]?

SU: Yeah. "Maukaloa," you know, place we used to stay. And then, Andrade, same thing, too. "Andrade Camp." Mill Camp is "Mill Camp." (Laughs) Used to get four teams. One, "Kawai Nui." Kawai Nui was a small place. But this Mill Camp, we get lot of people down there, so they was the strongest team every time, see. And once a year, we get together at the school. You know, school, we used to play. All the time we play in a regular cow pasture.

(Laughter)

SU: There's no such thing as baseball field. Of course, in Pepe'okeo Mill Camp, they have a field. They have nice field, see. If we want to play in the field, we used to go [to the] school and play. But from Maukaloa to school, you have to walk and come back, oh, what a time wasted. So we play at the pasture. If you want Mill Camp guys to come, we tell 'em, "Ey, you guys want to play ball with us? Come our place certain-certain time." And we go down his place, back and forth.

And then, the baseball bat, there's no such thing as that bat we buy. You know the big hoe, hah?

WN: Yeah.

SU: You know, the man kind hoe, the top little bit big, eh? We used to steal that. We used to go nighttime. We used to go down somebody's house, go steal. Nighttime, we go down there, three, four boys, we go down, we go steal the hoe. And then come home, we knock off the blade, and we cut the wood. We used to do that.

WN: You used to sand 'em down?

SU: Yeah. (Laughs)

WN: What about the ball?

SU: Baseball? We use that baseball till the damn. . . . I don't know. Use, use, use, until no more--cannot even use. Oh, boy, I'm telling you, boy. That was the day that you never can forget. (Chuckles)

WN: Did you challenge other plantations, too, or just . . .

SU: Well, when I came about seventeen, eighteen, I think, I play at Brewer League. They used to get Brewer League. That Hakalau, Honomū, Pepe'okeo, Pāpa'ikou, Wainaku. Five teams used to play every Sunday. Regular uniform--plantation furnish everything. Plantation furnish everything--spikes, glove, everything. Then, we used to get pretty good decent team, you know. We go to Hakalau. Hakalau wasn't so good in field, that cow pasture we play. Honomū

get nice field, regular nice field. And Pepe'ekeo, we don't have a field, but later on we made a field. We used to play at the school. Then Pāpa'ikou get nice field, really nice field. Hilo Sugar didn't have a field. So we used to go down to Hilo, Mo'ohau Park. Then we challenged 'Ōla'a, and then we challenged--come to this side here--Honohina, Laupahoehoe, Pāpa'aloa, 'Ōkaloa, Honoka'a. We used to challenge them. Then, later on, they merged together, and then play at Hilo. Hilo get JAC [Japanese Athletic Club], Waiākea Pirates, and outside, 'Ōla'a. 'Ōla'a was combined--'Ōla'a, Puna, and all that, see. And Pepe'ekeo, Honomu, Hakalau combined. We used to make about five, six teams. Then they started. Then later on, AJA [Americans of Japanese Ancestry], Japanese league. Only Japanese play. And then, the champion will come to Honolulu, Kaua'i, Maui, all around.

WN: You know your neighborhood, your camp, was mostly Japanese or. . . .

SU: Every one of them Japanese. No more outside nationality. Only nationality used to stay down is in the Mill Camp, Filipinos. They get one, two Koreans. And about two or three Spanish, that's all. Rest, Filipinos.

WN: But Maukaloa had all Japanese?

SU: All Japanese. Andrade Camp, they get one Portuguese. That Portuguese used to be a stable keeper. You know, where they keep the mules and everything, eh? Well, he was the guy who keep the stable. Rest, all Japanese. Filipino was only in Mill Camp.

WN: Up Maukaloa, what kind jobs did most of the people have?

SU: Plantation.

WN: I mean, any specific part of the plantation or. . . .

SU: Part of the plantation, you go same thing. Cut the cane, hoe the grass, everything. They used to get all different guys. They used to get wahine gang, go around and hoe the grasses. And then, men go cut grasses, cut cane, all that. And then, they used to get another gang, mule gang.

WN: That was what your father was in?

SU: Yeah. My father was mule gang, but different gang, that. He used to pull the small mule, you know. They call it "pack mule." Load up the fertilizer, lumber, everything, and then one, he rides and go around, all around the places. So, all the work is done by the mules that he pull, eh? So he just ride and go. That's why he get chance to go, after the work, his own place [i.e., tend his own cane]. And then, clean up the place, hole hole the place, hoe the grass, and everything, see. Otherwise, cannot. But you got to give him credit, though, because he really work hard, tsk. But it's too late for me to go ahead and think about it now. (Laughs)

WN: Well, what kind house did you folks live in?

SU: Very nice house.

WN: How many rooms had?

SU: My house had one, two, three--three rooms. Two bedrooms, one big parlor, and kitchen separate. Toilet, everybody use toilet.

WN: Oh, outside?

SU: Yeah, outside. And washing is same thing, too. Everybody wash. But you have to take a chance, eh? Bathroom, furo, everybody go. And then, they give everybody chance to operate the place. You do this one month, you do this one month, we do this one month, and then everybody pay fifty cents one month. Fifty cents to just go inside there.

WN: How many people lived over there, Maukaloa?

SU: Oh, chee, I really don't know, though. Oh, say, about sixty, seventy. So maybe about about over 100, including the wives and kids, eh?

WN: To take care of the furo, what did you have to do?

SU: Just go down there in the morning, you wash 'em up. You know, wash, eh? And then, when the time come, you burn the wood. And then, certain time, you open up. Everybody go inside. And everybody pau, you drain all the water, you wash again. Lot of work, you know. Lot of work. Especially when it come to shogatsu. Everybody go early in the morning and whole night you got to stay down there, fire.

WN: So one family would take care for one month?

SU: Yeah. So, by the time come to your [turn], maybe about couple years, one time, huh? But you make that much money, about thirty, forty dollars, eh? (Chuckles) Big money, you know.

WN: Fifty cents a month from each family?

SU: Yeah. They used to call them "dōshikai."

WN: "Dōshikai"?

SU: Yeah, that's a club. And then, they get only one telephone in the camp. One telephone only. And then, when they get telephone call, the old lady have to tell them to wait until we come. We come running. She come call us. We answer the phone. Only one telephone.

WN: Where was the phone?

SU: Mr. Okumura's place. It's right in the center of the camp. Mr. Okumura's place.

WN: What were some of the things the neighborhood did together, you know, for celebration or anything?

SU: Once a month, they get movie. You know, they bring in machine. Automobile, they get motor, everything. They start it off, then movie. Admission, you only pay fifty cents, or one dollar, whatever it is, eh?

WN: One dollar?

SU: Yeah. He don't tell you how much, you know. You pay so much. That's all. If you can afford two dollars, you pay two dollars.

WN: Can you pay ten cents?

SU: Yeah. If you don't want to pay. . . . Because those days, no more money. But the guy used to make money. Because everybody come. They used to get one church down there, Christian church. Can hold about, oh, about a hundred guys, maybe more. Put 'em outside, the yard. Oh, big tent, you know. Da kine tent, when the wind blow, (laughs) fly away kind tent, eh? We used to do that. And then, on shogatsu, you get sumo. Kids, eh? And then, what else we get? Tenchōsetsu, the birthday of the emperor, eh? Celebrate.

WN: What you folks did?

SU: Everybody make shibai. You know, amateur kind, eh? (Laughs)

WN: Where was the shibai?

SU: At the same place used to get a church and then a big yard down there, no? (Laughs) Yeah, that's about all, I think.

WN: What about shōgatsu?

SU: Shōgatsu, everybody celebrate. Sumō, everything.

WN: What did you do? Go house to house?

SU: Yeah, we go house to house. When we go house to house, they give you ten cents, five cents. (Laughs) We go all around the camp because you know all the camp guys, eh? Every one of them, you know, see? Yeah.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

WN: You know when you worked as a carpenter on the plantation, did you ever get to build houses, too?

SU: No. I cannot build the house because I don't know how to do it. When I came in Honolulu, when I worked for Nekomoto, I see those guys cutting the rafter, cutting the bridge underneath the house. Then I learned that. Then in 1930, I think was 1931--'30 or '31, I'm not sure--I leased the property from Magoon [Estate] in John 'Ena Road. Then I build the house. Because I know already how to cut everything, see. And then, all the friends come around Sunday, nailed 'em up. (Chuckles) Of course, some, not everything perfect, you know.

Then, while I'm doing that, I have to go to work. When depression came, no more job. You get job all right, but you go work, you don't get pay. So I got a job down Honolulu Country Club.

WN: This is after the carpenter job at Nekomoto?

SU: Yeah.

WN: Oh, okay. So you came Honolulu in 1928. You lived Sheridan for little while, huh?

SU: Yeah.

WN: Between '28 and '31?

SU: Yeah.

WN: So you worked various jobs? You know, one job to--you went Nekomoto . . .

SU: Nekomoto, and then I went to find a job at Pearl Harbor. Austin Engineering Company from New York. So I got a job, six dollars a day. What a jump! So, I made a few bucks. So, I bought, 1925 Ford Model-T car. Then, transportation, I use that. Then when I go work, I used to load 'em up, my car, five guys. I forget how much was it, though. Anyway, couple dollars. Those days, gasoline was cheap, see. Then after that, the job is done down there, so I work for Walker-Moody, and then Henry Freitas, and who else was? Few more other different contractors, I work. Then, myself and my friend Harry Teruya took the contract on Kawanānakoā School. You know the Kawanānakoā School right here. Ceiling--nail the ceiling, and floor, and shingle roof. Because that school, all the sides, all shingle roof, eh? So, after that, the job is done. Then, I make a few bucks, so I took contract. I was gutsy enough to go ahead and took subcontract. But the money cannot (chuckles) go far, eh? So I wen go broke. Then I start in restaurant business. (Chuckles) [Nineteen] thirty-two.

WN: Let me ask you two more questions before we get into your Honolulu restaurant. You're Okinawan, yeah?

SU: That's right.

WN: Your camp in Maukaloa, was it mostly Okinawan or. . . .

SU: No, no. Not. About half and half.

WN: Half half? You folks got along okay?

SU: Yeah. Everybody down there is okay.

WN: You said that you raised pigs. Did only the Okinawan families raise pigs?

SU: No, no, no, no. Everybody had a chance. Some of them raised vegetable. Because the plantation allowed them certain space for vegetable. But most of the people in camp used to raise chicken, no? See, when we kill the pig, we don't collect the money, now. Okay? "How many you want? How many you want?" We put the name down, everything, okay? Five pound, five pound, five pound, ten pound. And when they kill the pig, they give. They return us. We give and take, see? That's how we used to do, see? Because no money transaction. But chicken, yes. Chicken. How much one chicken cost? I don't know how much, but egg--one dozen eggs, what? Maybe quarter or less. We used to even raise rabbit. Yeah. The chicken that we used to raise for our food is that Rhode Island chicken, that red one--meat chicken. So, if the neighbor---you want to eat chicken, they say, "Okay. Take 'em from us. You eat." And when (chuckles) we want something, we get from them.

WN: So you would give them chicken, and they would give you maybe vegetable or something?

SU: Yeah. So all the neighbors and all the people stay in camp, they all work together. They all work together. Anything happen, they all come help.

WN: Before you left for Honolulu, what did your father say to you?

SU: Well, my father doesn't want me to come out, but I convinced my father that no sense go ahead and stay in plantation, you only make so much. I said, "No worry. When I go down Honolulu, I work hard, I send you some money," which I did. When I was working down Pearl Harbor, I used to send money to him every time. So, I told him, "Well, you might as well come out Honolulu." So in nineteen. . . . I think was couple years later, he came out. The whole family came out. We sold the cane field he had, we sold everything, and he came out. We stay at John 'Ena Road. But the house was so small, we have to crowd, but can't help it. So that's the reason why I leased the property from Magoon right next to Toma. You know, that fisherman, Toma? Then, I build the house.

WN: What did the area look like when you first got the lease?

SU: Oh, nothing but sand. All sand. Level. And then, right behind, oh, I'd say about maybe fifty feet, maybe more, duck pond. That Magoon used to raise duck. And Toma used to take care that. And then, same time, Toma go out fishing. He throw net. He doesn't work, only fish. Then whatever he catch, he sell to the neighbors, he sell to the teahouse. You know the two teahouses? Down there. And then, whatever get over, he used to take down to Liliha Street. Liliha Street get teahouse, eh? What was the teahouse?

WN: Mochizuki?

SU: Yeah, yeah. Kunawai Lane or something?

WN: Kunawai Lane.

SU: Yeah. Then I got a job down, my father, at the Honolulu Country Club. Greenskeeper. He only make hole every day. Twice a day, he go around.

WN: Your father?

SU: Yeah. Four dollars one day.

WN: Where was Honolulu Country Club?

SU: Nu'uanu, up here.

WN: Oh, O'ahu Country Club?

SU: Yeah.

WN: Oh, I see.

SU: Four dollars a day, twice a day, he goes around. And then, he used to pick up lot of balls, loose kind balls, eh? When they hit the ball, they lose the ball. He used to pick up. He used to bring home all of the. . . . Boy, I used to get plenty balls from him. And then, I say, "Well, I better try golf." Got to go out and buy the golf set. So I went to E.O. Hall [& Son] where Mackey Yanagisawa used to work.

WN: Where is this?

SU: E.O. Hall. King and Fort Street.

WN: E.O. Hall?

SU: Yeah. Next to the Home Insurance Company. Then only twenty-five dollars, those days, cheap. Of course, not good one, junk kind. Then I went out to hit the ball. You know where the Kau-Kau Korner is? Right across used to have driving range, eh?

WN: Oh, yeah?

SU: Yeah. Usually go down there, hit. But I cannot go all the time because I didn't have the time. So, after I practice, practice, I went to golf course. Used to have golf course down Palolo. Yeah, Palolo, nine-hole. I used to go down there. Well, I went about three, four times, I think. Then when I did the restaurant, haven't got the time. So I gave away everything. But baseball, I used to go, you know.

WN: What were the terms of your lease with Magoon?

SU: Ten dollars a month, I pay tax. So, \$120 a year, yeah? Pay the tax.

WN: What was the address?

SU: Well, at that time, my address was 480 John 'Ena Road. No such thing as Makano Lane.

WN: So you were actually not on John 'Ena Road?

SU: No. In Makano Lane, the second house next to Toma.

WN: So there were houses on Makano Lane?

SU: Yeah. They used to house lot of houses. From behind, I don't know who was it, but Japanese people used to raise pig. After the pig is over, there's a Mr. Uyehara. He came from Waiakea, Hilo. Came inside. And next is Kaneshiro. Junk. He buy all the junk--junkman, eh? Then, let's see. Takara. Well, he came from Hakalau. He worked at Honolulu Dairyman's. Then Mr. Oshiro, I don't know what kind of job he was doing. Then, Mr. Uyehara. He came from Pepe'ekeo Andrade Camp. He worked at the Moana Hotel. I don't know what kind of job he's doing, but anyway he got a job at the Moana Hotel. Then, Suzuka. He was a mechanic, Universal Motors. Then Aoki, taxi driver. Then Sakuda worked yardboy somewhere down Nu'uanu. And Matsuda, he was a driver for Carter. Ex-Governor [George R.] Carter, yeah? And then, they used to have one store down there. I forgot his name.

WN: Furubayashi?

SU: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Then . . .

WN: So this is near the corner of 'Ena Road and Makano Lane?

SU: Yeah, yeah, yeah. That's right, that's right. No look like store, you know. Then from behind, Yoda. And then, that name was--I forgot his name. And Matsumori. Next used to be a Hawaiian fella, Hawaiian-Chinese, Asing. And Aona. You know, Dan Aona?

WN: Oh, Aona?

SU: Yeah. And then, me. I was there. And then next is Toma. And

then, the Filipino family was right there, one. And then, Kitagawa. You know, ice man Kitagawa, eh? And that Haole boy--what his name was? Fuji. . . .

WN: Nakafuji?

SU: Nakafuji. Then, Kimoto. Then, Murakami. Then, that barbershop was. . . . What was the name, the barbershop name was? Barbershop, tsk, I forgot his name. And then, Kobayashi was right on the corner. Then that Hobron Lane used to have Takara, and Saiki?

WN: Sakai?

SU: Sakai, yeah, Sakai. And one more fella, who was the guy name was? Shiraki, I think was, hah?

WN: Shiraki? I don't know. Maybe.

SU: And then, some other guys was down there, but I don't know because I never go around those kind places, so.

WN: The area you're telling me is the John 'Ena, Makaanoe Lane, Hobron Lane, and Kalākaua Avenue, around there, yeah?

SU: Yeah, yeah. And then, right across, you know where Mr. Tagawa used to stay? The apartment houses?

WN: On the corner of John 'Ena and Kalākaua?

SU: Yeah, yeah. Behind that house, Nakamura and the fish dealer used to stay. And few more other guys. Then on Kalākaua side, Dr. Yanagi, and Furukawa or somebody. The other side there get three, four more other families, but I don't know.

WN: And then, Ray [Jerome] Baker's studio was around there?

SU: Yeah, yeah. Baker's studio was. . . . Every night he used to run the movie, eh? And next to Baker used to have Kennedy. And then, below is my place [i.e., SU's restaurant, Smile Cafe]. (Chuckles)

WN: So this area was mostly Japanese, then?

SU: Mostly Japanese, only few Hawaiians. I think, Hawaiians, I forget all those guys' name already. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven. Seven or eight Hawaiians.

WN: Where did the Hawaiians live? Near each other or . . .

SU: Yeah, yeah, in there. They was all good Hawaiians, though, except one guy drunk every time. (Laughs)

WN: Where was the Hawaiians' houses?

SU: Hawaiian houses, one is right next to us. Dan Aona, eh? Those guys. And one Keala used to be right across from--between Aoki and Suzuka, in there, one. And the rest stay behind by the canal.

WN: So, where your house was on Makanoe Lane, what is over there now?

SU: Now, I don't know. I think the place must be all clear and then apartment houses or condo, eh? I don't know.

WN: Got a place called Waipuna, condominium?

SU: I don't know what they call.

WN: Hard to recognize now, that place, yeah?

SU: I asked Magoon to give me a lease when my lease expire, you know. Long lease. I promised that I going build one good nice house. He said, "No." He did not give the lease.

WN: When was this?

SU: Oh, about '46 or '47. So, I cannot help, so I have to build on Kapi'olani.

WN: Tell me something about that duck pond that Toma took care of.

SU: Well, right behind us, they used to have a duck [pond]. Toma-san used to feed. You know, whatever they get, they throw 'em inside the water. All the ducks used to come around. And then, when we like to eat duck, we just grab 'em, clean 'em up, and do it, see. And then, duck, here and there, lay the egg, eh? We used to go (chuckles) out there, look for the egg inside the water, you know. And meantime, when he go out fishing, when he catch lot of fish, lot of big mullet, he used to smoke that. He used to get big fifty-gallon barrel, and on top, double-decker, he used to hang all the fish. And then, underneath, he burn wood. And then the smoke come out and smoke the fish. That's what he used to do for Magoon too, see. A.K. Magoon.

WN: What kind of a person was Mr. Magoon?

SU: Magoon, shrewd bugger, though. Shrewd guy, was. But as long as you don't bother them, they don't even bother you.

WN: In that area there was a amusement park, eh?

SU: Right across. Right behind Smile Cafe, amusement park [i.e., Aloha Park]. That's where Mr. Hosoi--I think younger brother than the one that used to operate the funeral parlor, yeah--used to run gambling joint after four o'clock. He used to order [from] me sandwiches. He tell me, "Make any kind of sandwich." So I used to make cheese, tomato, egg--the cheap kind, eh? Those days, only ten cents, eh? So, I used to make about four, five dozen. Deliver down his place.

He pay me cash. Then, weekend, his place, full of empty bottle, whiskey bottle.

Then, those days, when I order tomato, you know, orange box. You know, the big orange box used to have before, wooden kind, eh? Fill up, two side, only thirty-five cents. Thirty-five cents. And bag of tamana, twenty-five cents, thirty-five cents. And then, pineapple, you know, the half-ton truck, behind, eh? You load 'em up, fifty cents.

WN: This is from the wholesalers?

SU: Yeah. Fifty cents, only. And then, how much? Bag of rice from wholesaler about dollar and a quarter [\$1.25]. Potato, seventy-five cents. Onion, fifty cents. You just leave 'em on the side, behind the building. Nobody steal or nothing. We used to stack 'em up. Nobody do nothing. Nobody touch. But since we came state [i.e., after 1959], well, different story. We got to lock 'em up. Even though we lock 'em up, same thing happen.

WN: Okay, Mr. Uyehara, what I'm going to do is, I'm going to stop here. And I was wondering if I can come back one more time, and then we'll pick up from there and we'll talk about your restaurant. Will that be okay?

SU: Yeah.

END OF INTERVIEW

Tape No. 13-68-2-86

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Sam Uyehara (SU)

March 10, 1986

Pauoa, O'ahu

BY: Warren Nishimoto (WN)

WN: This is an interview with Mr. Sam Uyehara at his home in Pauoa on March 10, 1986. The interviewer is Warren Nishimoto.

Okay, Mr. Uyehara, let's start this session by talking about your restaurant. You started in 1932. How did you get started?

SU: I don't know. Just all of a sudden. Because when I used to be a carpenter, you go to work for the contractor, month to month, you don't get pay. So, well, heck, if I'm going to work for somebody else without any pay, I might as well do something. In meantime, I used to hang around American Cafe and Hibiscus Cafe, see. So, I, well, start something, anyway. (Chuckles) That's how I started, see.

WN: You mean, like American Cafe, you hung around there . . .

SU: Yeah. (Laughs) Because I used to have a friend down there working, waiter, cook. Because no sense me go to work. I go to work, I don't get pay. I might as well stay home. (Laughs)

WN: There was the owner of American Cafe . . .

SU: Takara.

WN: Ushi Takara?

SU: Yeah, yeah. He's a pioneer, though. Yeah. He taught lot of these young boys. And Hibiscus Cafe, that's where all the University [of Hawai'i] guys used to hang around, I know that.

WN: I know that Mr. Takara was Okinawan, and you're Okinawan. I know a lot of the restaurants in Honolulu are run by or owned by Okinawans.

SU: At that time, yeah.

WN: Why is that?

SU: Well, I don't know. Because he used to teach all these youngsters, eh?

WN: Okinawan youngsters?

SU: Yeah. Not only Okinawan, but all different nationality, too. That's how, maybe, it started, but I don't know. But today, not so much already, see.

WN: What kind of things did he teach you?

SU: Well, I hung around there. He teach me how to make. . . . At first, I go wash dishes for nothing, you know. I go wash dishes. Well, anybody can do that, see. But you got to know the art. Then, he tell me peel potato, peel onion. (Chuckles) And then, cut the vegetable. And then, after he get through with that one, he show me how to fry hamburger, veal cutlet, pork cutlet, all that meat, everything, right in the front of the stove with the chef right next to me, see? That's how I learn. (Laughs) I don't know nothing. Absolutely I don't know nothing. I don't know even how to fry the egg. (Chuckles)

WN: When did you decide that you wanted to start a restaurant?

SU: In '32, I think was October. I'm pretty sure, October. Then I got the place down there. I remodeled it. Fix up the place, remodel the place. At that time, if you put about \$1,000, you can make pretty good size of lumbers and all the labor and everything. Everything was cheap, that time. Then I fix up the place. And then, I hire friends, cooks. I ask them, I talk to them. My father went down there, talk to him. So he agree to quit some other place that he was working, and then come help us.

WN: Who is this?

SU: This fella's name is Mr. Uyehara. He's already gone. And this fella, Takara. Another Takara. American Cafe cousin. He's gone, too, already. Mr. Uyehara work day shift. He's a chef. And then, Mr. Takara work night shift. We open twenty-four hours. Then, I go daytime and nighttime. I go just hang around, look, look. I help them. And finally I catch on this. And then I come home, I read the cooking book, eh? (Chuckles) Just read, then try. Because I get nothing to lose, that's my own, eh? I try. And then, I catch on everything like that. Then, things go good. Instead of me going to work, I hire more cooks. And then, make them work, and meantime I working, I watching. I go wash dishes, peel potato, peel onion, everything. I put about fourteen, sixteen hours a day.

WN: You said it cost about \$1,000 to remodel the place . . .

SU: Yeah, maybe over than that.

WN: How did you get the money?

SU: My father borrowed from his friend, Mr. Kawakami. Mr. Kawakami was the head bookkeeper [for] M. Otani, that auction--you know where they used to auction fish, eh? He was the head bookkeeper down there. He borrowed from him. Of course, we pay him back and everything. Mr. Kawakami's wife is my father's cousin. And then, I made little few bucks and extend, extend.

WN: How did you acquire the land in Waikīkī?

SU: Well, that Bishop Estate [lease] was acquired by Mr. Saburo Teruya from Hibiscus Cafe. He started off the foundation, see, and then he give to me.

WN: Teruya acquired the lease first?

SU: Yeah. Because he get experience in cooking, everything. Him and another Teruya is the co-owners of this Hibiscus Cafe on Bethel Street. He tell me, "You folks, instead of loafing, you better do something." So he just help me out and do everything for me, see. I was young boy that time.

WN: Where exactly was Smile Cafe?

SU: Exactly on the road where the road come from Ala Moana to Kalākaua, right on the spot right there by the road.

WN: Where they extended the road [i.e., Ala Moana Boulevard, from Kālia Road to Kalākaua Avenue]?

SU: Yeah. Right there.

WN: So it was on Kalākaua?

SU: Yeah. (Chuckles)

WN: That was the days before Ala Moana extended all the way to Kalākaua?

SU: Yeah. And then, right about four or five feet--about five feet--is the fence, that Fort DeRussy, eh? Of course, at that time, no more fence, too, you know. But after the war [World War II] they put the fence on, see. Till then was all kiawe, nothing but kiawe trees. In front they get the wall now, Kalākaua? That was put by the Japanese people during the wartime. All the old men used to go down there, all, they put 'em up, you know. And they put the fence, too, all around.

WN: I'll ask you about the war a little later on. But any particular reason or why did you folks decide on getting that land in Waikīkī and not, say, Downtown or someplace else?

- SU: Well, that I don't know though, because that, Mr. Teruya started for me. Well, maybe he figured Waikīkī is the best place because of Barbecue Inn, eh? Barbecue Inn was before us toward to Waikīkī side. And they was really popular, remember that? Barbecue Inn was popular. So maybe that's the reason. That, I don't know.
- WN: What was there before? You said you had to remodel the place.
- SU: That used to be a amusement center ticket office. You know, the amusement center was behind, eh? Ferris wheel and everything was behind, eh? And that was the ticket office.
- WN: That was the [Aloha Park]?
- SU: Yeah, mm hmm. So when we remodeled the place down there, when we tear up the floor, everything, we find some money, you know. Yeah.
- WN: How much?
- SU: Well, that, (chuckles) I don't know. Quarters, half dollars, one dollar. Those days, get dollar bill and dollar silver. Yeah, and quite a bit. And then, we used to find this 'ōkolehao. You know, the 'ōkolehao, that whiskey, eh? Oke. Those days was all bush, eh? So they hide 'em down there, see. Yeah.
- WN: What had to be done to make the place look like a restaurant?
- SU: (Laughs) Well, got to fix up, and then paint 'em up. Change all the front side with all the plate glasses, eh? You know the big plate glass? (Chuckles) You know, make it different just like store, you know. And then, the parking. Of course, the parking, we clean up the parking. We don't pave the place, just gravel. Then put big sign, "Smile Cafe." (Chuckles)
- WN: How did you get the name, "Smile Cafe"?
- SU: Well, we all get together. The former Tanaka Appliance Store at Pāwa'a, right next to the Washington Intermediate School. Now they have that drive-in, what drive-in?
- WN: Zippy's?
- SU: Zippy's? Right there used to have Tanaka Appliance. Mr. Tanaka and I used to be good friends, see. So he tell me, "Ey, Sam, I think you might as well put 'Smile Cafe,' though."
- I says, "Okay."
- That's how we started, see. Put "Smile Cafe." And then, when I put Smile Cafe, everybody tell, "Ey, you got to smile every time."

(Laughter)

SU: That's why, when we--on the show window, big show window, put the face of the people smiling. (Laughs) Yeah. Too bad I don't have the picture of that. Yeah, I don't know where all my pictures went to.

WN: So, was \$1,000 for everything?

SU: Maybe \$1,000 or maybe more. Maybe more, though. Because the fella who used to come to help me, we don't pay, eh? He just help, eh? So when you figure out all that, it's more, you know. But they don't take money, just help. Nail everything. (Chuckles)

WN: How long did it take you to remodel?

SU: Oh, chee, I think couple months, I think. I think couple months, though. Because we cannot go ahead and afford to hire--paint and everything, eh? My electrician used to be Mr. Nagai. He used to stay down McCully. And from McCully, he moved to Wai'anae. I wonder if his son's taking over the Wai'anae shop or not. But he was my electrician, put all the electric lights, everything, inside the cafe. Those days, was cheap. Not like now, you know. And then, he fix up everything.

WN: Oh, electrician--what, was just one contractor . . .

SU: Yeah, one contractor only, Mr. Nagai.

WN: Nineteen thirty-two, that was right around depression time . . .

SU: Yeah, depression time. Nineteen thirty-two, depression time. You know how much, those days, meal cost? Thirty-five cents for whole luncheon. Soup, salad, meal--you know, regular meal--dessert, and drink. Thirty-five cents. And bread, butter. And we used to make money. We used to make money, you know.

Of course, those days, a loaf of bread [cost] only two and a half cents, eh? One-pound loaf of bread, two and a half cents. Just imagine. I don't know how much butter cost. But I forget all those things already. Bag of rice about dollar and a quarter [\$1.25], 100 pound. Potato, about dollar and a quarter [\$1.25]. Onion, fifty cents. Fifty pounds, onion. Fifty cents. And tomatoes, you know the big orange box. Before, used to come down with wooden kind, eh? You fill 'em up till the top on both sides, twenty-five, thirty-five cents. Just mind you, boy. Then, pineapple, you know the half-ton truck, you fill 'em up, fifty cents. And then, cabbage, head cabbage, one bag, two bits, quarter. And then, sometimes, you know the big Chinese basket they use at the market. You fill 'em up, cabbage, twenty-five cents, thirty-five cents. Was cheap, those days. Yeah, real cheap. Had big tomatoes.

WN: Where did you get the . . .

SU: They used to come around and sell. Because they go to all different places. Same thing, so they come to the restaurant.

WN: You mean, these are the farmers or . . .

SU: Yeah, the farmers, regular farmers. From Wai'anae, they used to come. So, we sell tomato sandwich, ten cents. We don't cut 'em thin. We cut 'em thick.

WN: Tomatoes?

SU: Tomato sandwich. Ten cents, now. Egg sandwich, ten cents. Hamburger sandwich, ten cents. But not everybody going eat hamburger sandwich at that time. Mostly eat barbecue pork. Barbecue Inn used to be popular on that, eh? Barbecue pork. We used to sell Friday, Saturday, Sunday, at my place, now--my place alone--we used to sell 75 to 100 dozen. Hundred dozen, now, buns. That including barbecue pork, hamburger, tomato, everything all including, you know. And Barbecue Inn used to sell, oh, double of that. And then, you know, the lean ham, the ham pork, we used to roast ten, fifteen a day, now, for sandwich. Nothing but that barbecue pork sandwich.

WN: Who supplied the pork?

SU: I used to get from Armour and Company, Swift, C.Q. Yee Hop, and Sun Wing Wo--my friend, Chinese fella, he used to own market down there. But most of the things, we get from Armour and Company because I have a friend down there, Richard Okashige used to be a salesman down there. And I used to get a Chinese fella who work with Swift and Company. I used to divide all that because I don't want to buy 'em one place. So I can get all around. So when war [World War II] started, I get from Armour, Swift, C.Q. Yee Hop, and Sun Wing Wo. That's why, I never used to get shortage of anything, see. Like pork, steak, hot dog, butter, egg, ham. I used to supply some of them to KC Drive Inn. You know where the KC Drive Inn used to be? Well, he and I used to exchange. He doesn't sell meat too much, steak too much. But me, I sell lot of steak before because of the defense workers, eh? I used to give him hot dog, hamburger. That's his business, eh? But I used to take his ham and steak. Exchange with him.

WN: The owner of KC was Mr. Asato?

SU: Asato, yeah.

WN: When you first started in '32, what was on your menu?

SU: Well, same like on a restaurant. Hamburger, hamburger steak, veal cutlet, pork cutlet, and turtle cutlet. You know, those days, you can get turtle, eh?

WN: Yeah?

SU: Yeah. We used to call "turtle steak."

WN: How you used to make that?

SU: Well, same like beef cutlet. Cut 'em thin, and then you put the bread crumbs, and then fry 'em. And then, pot roast beef, stew, curry, corned beef, corned beef hash, all those things in the menu. Scallops, fried oysters, you know, all those. Steaks. Those days, we don't know nothing about this T-bone steak, or porterhouse steak, or what. But as you go, you learn. Ah, porterhouse steak is this kind of steak, T-bone steak is this kind of steak, New York cut is this kind of steak, sirloin steak is this kind of steak, rib steak is this kind of steak. You know, as you go buy, you learn, see? But those days, everything was cheap. T-bone steak only dollar and a quarter [\$1.25]. Really, take big man to eat big T-bone steak, you know. Porterhouse steak is worse, bigger. Of course, get little bit more bone, but. Most of the time we used to sell sirloin steak and rib steak. Rib steak, it really tastes good because of the little bit fat in, eh? But we don't know nothing about New York cut, filet mignon. We don't know those things. But as you keep on going, you learn. And then, filet mignon, you know tenderloin, we used to cut, and then we put bacon around on the side. Yeah, that's how we learning.

And then, I used to take my friend to go all different restaurants. Go try. Because they don't know us, eh? So we try. Say, "Hey, you go take this, you go take this. We go try."

WN: And if was good, you would try and make 'em like that?

SU: Yeah. Come home, we going try. So, I used to sell lots of this curry. Shrimp curry, beef curry, pork curry, all those things. We used to sell quite a bit of those. Because I used to have lot of University [of Hawai'i] kids who used to come around. Of course, I give them a special price, University. And I used to get three, four University boys. I forget the name already. I used to give them a part-time job, two, three hours a day, Saturday, and Sunday, go wash dish. I think was, those days, there's no such thing as wage scale, you know. I forget how much I paid already, those fellas. Pay them off and give (chuckles) them a meal.

WN: When you first started, about how many tables did you have?

SU: Let's see. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten--eleven or twelve tables, that's all I had. And then, I extend. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven--about eight more extend.

WN: When did you expand?

SU: Oh, I think was when the liquor finally appealed in 1934.

WN: [Nineteen] thirty-four, so about two years after you opened?

SU: Yeah, yeah, yeah. And then, I made a bar, too, see. Concrete everything, bar.

WN: What is this about the liquor?

SU: Nineteen thirty-four liquor appeal, eh?

WN: Liquor appeal?

SU: Yeah.

WN: What happened, that time?

SU: I took the license. You know, liquor license right away.

WN: Oh, after Prohibition [1920-1933], you mean?

SU: Yeah.

WN: Oh, I see.

SU: And then, we served beer, you know, draft beer, eh? We used to empty quite a bit, Saturday and Sunday. Friday, Saturday, Sunday, we used to empty about seven barrels. You know, big--six to seven barrels. That, fifteen gallon was in there. And then, in order to keep the beer. . . . We have to keep the beer every time, one or two in ice house, see. So I bought one big--you know, the ice house used to go around all around the place before? Big wooden kind? I bought one of that. And then, I put 300 pounds of ice inside there. One big block. And then, put beer. At least about two [barrels]. I gotta keep some beer because we run out, no good, see. So, that's what we used to do.

And then, fella who deliver Primo--was the only place they used to deliver the beer, eh? They get Lucky Lager, and all different, Primo beer, everything, in there, see. So you have to make good with the driver, eh? (Laughs) Boy, we used to do all kind of trick. When the guy who deliver the beer come, we tell, "Hey, roll the beer inside and put inside." He put it inside, he cap the beer for us. "Okay," we say, "what kind of sandwich you want to eat?" You got to ho'omalimali them, eh? You got to do that, otherwise you get nothing, you know.

WN: Did you do that with all the other delivery people?

SU: Well, some of them, we used to do that. But special, like beer, and then the salesman--wholesale salesman, eh? But after everything, war is over, everything is all going to normal, we only pick up certain salesman, seeing that we didn't need every day, you know. Like vegetable, I used to deal with Ala Moana Produce, Rancho, Pacific Products--three different places. Rancho used to be big one, you know, the Asakura, eh? And then, this fella, Pacific Products, Ebisu, used to handle most of the Mainland

orange, apple, fruits. And then, this Ogawa from Ala Moana Produce, mostly fresh kind vegetable. That's why, you got to take care them. This Rancho, onion, potato, all those things.

WN: After the war, you dealt with less wholesalers than before the war?

SU: Well. . . . Yeah, yeah, yeah. And then, when the war's over, I deal with only Ala Moana and Pacific, that's all.

WN: When you first started, how much hired help did you have?

SU: Let's see, daytime, I get one, two, three, four, five, six kitchen. Daytime, nighttime, I get about six. And outside, one, two, three, four, five--five, six, and some part-time. But altogether, about twelve to fourteen, maybe fifteen, I think.

WN: Yeah? You mean, waitresses and all kinds?

SU: Yeah, yeah. Daytime. You know, daytime, nighttime, because at that time, you come in the morning six o'clock, and then you go home about two o'clock, and come back about four o'clock, five o'clock. Broken shift, eh? But now, you cannot do that, see? You have to give them straight hours, eh? That's why, need more men. Those days, no. Those days, slack time, you only get two, three girls. Busy time--in the morning, busy see, you get big bunch of girls, and lunchtime. And after the lunch, about two o'clock to four o'clock, not too many guys eating, so we can get less girls work and less cooks. Get one cook, one dishwasher, 'nough, see. Me, I stand by, see, I learn. That's why, my time is no limit.

WN: When you first started, who were your customers mainly?

SU: Chee, I don't know.

WN: Before the war now.

SU: Before the war, I don't know.

WN: I mean, people who lived in the area or. . . .

SU: No, all over. I get lot of University boys, though. I cannot say that because I don't know. Most of them come down with the foot [i.e., walk], eh? From all neighbors. And University boys, football players, baseball players, all that.

WN: What did that area look like when you first started in '32?

SU: When I first started, my behind get amusement center. And toward to Waikiki side, where they clean up down there, Fort DeRussy now, nothing but kiawe. All kiawe. Then, on my Downtown side, they get building and everything now, used to be nothing but kiawe, too, see. And then, right in front, you know, McCully and Kalakaua, used to have Sarashina Inn, you know that, eh?

WN: No, I don't know that.

SU: Sarashina Inn, used to be nothing but kiawe, a place down there, you know.

WN: What is that? Restaurant?

SU: Yeah. Sarashina Inn used to be restaurant. You get all booth. Booth. And then, right behind, nothing but kiawe bush, you know. And then, when you cross the Ala Wai Boulevard when you get bridge down there and get canal, right next to the canal, get park down there now, Ala Wai Field. That place used to be nothing but kiawe trees. Nothing but kiawe trees on both sides.

WN: What about that area across Kalākaua from your place? You know, where near Kūhiō and Kalākaua meet.

SU: Well, Kūhiō and Kalākaua meet, used to have few houses. And right in front of me, you know, get twenty-four-hour service station, eh? Before, behind on that side, some places get houses, kiawe, and all those things.

WN: So, before they extended Ala Moana Road all the way to Kalākaua from Kālia Road, what was in that area between Kālia Road and your place?

SU: Kiawe trees. Kiawe trees and house here and there. You know, the junk houses, eh? When the war started, that's when they start to clean up--all the Japanese aliens, eh? They put--the old folks used to come down, chop the stone and make the wall. And then, put the fence behind. When they put the fence behind there, they bring the Japanese from Japan, eh? Okinawa people and all kind of people. And just happen that my father used to know one guy, Teruya. Boy, when my father saw him, he yell by the name, you know. So, my father knew what is what. They need rice, eh? You know, when you come the Haole place, they only get bread, eh? No more rice. So my father used to make musubi and give. I make good with the sergeant, Sergeant Anderson. He watchman, you know. Yeah, I used to give them.

WN: These are the people that got interned during the war?

SU: Yeah, yeah. Yeah, that's the one.

WN: You mean, where were they interned? Sand Island?

SU: Yeah, they were Sand Island and way down 'Ewa side. What do you call the place down there?

WN: Honouliuli?

SU: Yeah, yeah, yeah. That's where.

WN: Oh, and they made 'em go work by Fort DeRussy?

SU: Yeah, they clean everything. They bring by the truck, you know.

WN: What did they do besides clean up?

SU: Well, some people help the old folks make the wall, bring the stone, and everything. You feel really sorry for them, boy. But I made good with the Sergeant Anderson. So, when the time come, he goes away. He gives the signal, eh? He goes away, that's when (chuckles) we used to go and give 'em. He knew what's going on, but he pretend he don't know, see. But it used to cost me money. When everybody go home, his duty is all pau already, he used to come to the bar. I used to give him a drink. You got to play ball with him. And then they built baseball park behind, you know, behind there--baseball park? Then, I talked to him and he opened one small doorway, go back and forth.

WN: You mean, from the park to your restaurant?

SU: Yeah. So the soldiers used to come back and forth, every time, our place, eh? (Laughs)

WN: So, when the war started, how was business?

SU: Business? I wish I had one more time da kine war. Boom. When the war started, that morning, I have a ballclub called Waikiki. And I told my brother go down Pearl City. We had a scrimmage game at Pearl City. Some of them was going. And then, in the morning, about seven o'clock, or before seven, or after seven, hear lot of noise. So I get up in the morning, I see some airplanes flying. So I put on the radio. War already. I don't know how the hell I put my pants and everything. Oh, I just run to the restaurant. And then, close 'em up the place. I get no more door. In front, get door, but on the side no more door, you know.

WN: You mean, all night, you had no more door?

SU: Yeah. All night. So, I find the old lumber, everything, I nail 'em up. Of course, kitchen had door and everything. So, at that time, nobody will steal anything. You just leave the things down there, nobody walk away with 'em. At that time, my number two sister, she works there. She take care from two o'clock in the morning till six o'clock. Only herself in front and one cook behind. Same time he cook, and when he get time, he wash all the dishes and everything. From two o'clock to six o'clock, only two--one of my sisters and the cook. Then, when she's busy, she just leave the cigar box. The customer put the money inside.

WN: Where was the box?

SU: Right by cash register. Yeah, you know, I tell you, people really honest. Really honest, you know. Really honest. Of course, not

every time busy, you see. When we moved after we got condemned down Waikīkī, we moved to Kapi'olani, we did the same thing. Two girls in the morning cannot keep up with the crowd that used to come in the morning. We used to open six o'clock in the morning. The crowd rush. So we did the same thing. Pastry, we have, oh, about two feet by two feet [container of] pastry. We put all kind of pastry inside there with cover on, with a cigar box on the side. We list doughnut, two for so much; biscuits, two for so much. They put the money inside. Really honest, though. Really honest. After come state [i.e., after 1959], changed. It changed. Customers used to go to the kitchen, draw his own coffee, pay, and go out.

WN: They used to go in the kitchen?

SU: Yeah, in the kitchen. Go right in the kitchen, draw his own coffee, (chuckles) pay, go. Real honest. Honest people, really honest people.

WN: Even during the war and all of the soldiers coming around, too?

SU: Yeah.

WN: No problems?

SU: No problem at all. Those days, you don't have no watchmen. You know, like now, everybody get one watchman, bouncer, eh? Those days, no more. But after business start to go good, then you have to get the watchman because the soldier and civilian fight, eh? So, you have to get bouncer.

WN: Oh, had fights between . . .

SU: Oh, yeah. Blood fight. Really fight, you know.

WN: Inside your restaurant?

SU: They go outside. We chase 'em outside. Outside, the yard, really. At that time, you know the wrestling, eh? Wrestling was popular. I used to take care the Indian wrestler, Agi Singh. Big bugger, over 300 pounds. Really big bugger, you know. That guy, when the guy eat, he eat about double of the--triple. And [wrestling promoter] Al Karasick paid all the bill. He said, "Sam, give 'em all they want to eat." Agi Singh, and then one more wrestler I used to take care. I forgot the name already, then. And then, end of the week, he pay me everything, see. Because Al Karasick, "Red" McQueen, Don Watson, Louis Leong Hop, Andrew Mitsukado, and Monte Ito, those guys, and that guy, Chinese fella, the sports writer, what his name was?

WN: Bill Gee?

SU: Yeah, Bill Gee. They used to be good friends, you know. They work

different [news]papers. When the job is down, they used to come down Smile Cafe. One table.

(Laughter)

SU: Yeah, that's how used to be.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

WN: What was the size, the physical size of your restaurant. You know the square footage? The square footage of your restaurant? How big?

SU: Chee, I don't know, though. I get no idea. Get no idea.

WN: Was the bar separate from the restaurant?

SU: Yeah. Altogether separate. And then, the Quarterback Club, when we made the Quarterback Club, it's all separate, too, see. And 1947, I fix upstairs, you know.

WN: You had upstairs, too?

SU: Yeah, upstairs. Soon as I fix up the place, road go through, eh? And upstairs, usually, used by the newspaper guys mostly. Used to use every day. So most of the time was all occupied all the time. Quarterback Club, every Monday afternoon, just like now at the Chuckwagon, eh?

WN: When did the Quarterback Club start meeting?

SU: I think we started. . . . "Pump" Searle started in nineteen. . . . Chee, about '35, '36, no, I think. Yeah. "Pump" Searle started it off, see. Every Monday we get together. At that time, we had quite a bit of guys, though. About twenty, twenty-five guys, maybe, more or less. And then, gradually grow. We cannot hold in there already. So we have to go upstairs. Upstairs can hold about sixty, seventy guys about.

WN: Oh, yeah? Was that like a banquet room or something?

SU: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

WN: Did you have other kind of functions . . .

SU: Yeah.

WN: . . . like weddings or something?

- SU: No, no. We cannot take those kinds, too big. The place cannot hold. No weddings, no nothing, too big. So maybe, I would say, the biggest party maybe seventy-five. Less than 100, though. Sure, if I have a bigger place, I could take. So, that was the biggest I can hold, and most of the time was all occupied.
- WN: What were the other restaurants in that Waikīkī area at the time you started that served the same kind food as you?
- SU: Let's see, Barbecue Inn.
- WN: That was down the other side?
- SU: Yeah. Toward to Waikīkī side. And right across my place, get service station. Toward to Waikīkī side used to have Chicken Griddle. You remember that, eh?
- WN: Yeah.
- SU: Okay. And then, toward to Downtown side, used to have Sarashina Inn. Serve same kind of food, but they are all different booths. So you can bring the wahine, go down there, eh? You know. And then, further down, you go to, of course, KC Drive Inn and everything, but further to Waikīkī side, you have the Bluebird Cafe. You know that?
- WN: Yeah. Who owned the Bluebird Cafe?
- SU: K.Q. Takara. He passed away already, see.
- WN: No relation to Ushi Takara?
- SU: No, no, no. No relation to, no nothing. Then, when you go down, used to get Waikīkī Tavern, eh? Then when you go down further down, used to have Blue Ocean Inn.
- WN: Oh. What's over there now where Blue Ocean used to be?
- SU: No more nothing. All clear up already. No more Waikīkī Tavern, too, already. All clear up.
- WN: That's near the Moana, eh?
- SU: Yeah, next to Moana used to be Steinback, Judge Steinback's home, eh?
- WN: [Harry] Steiner.
- SU: Yeah. Oh. The next one is the Waikīkī Tavern. That's about all, I think, was the restaurant at that time. And then, the bar, they had the Banzai Inn, corner John 'Ena Road and Kalākaua. Banzai Inn.

WN: That was only a bar?

SU: That place, my place, Barbecue, and get one more. One Haole guy used to own the place down there. I forget the name. That's about all. Oh, Lau Yee Chai right across. Yeah, Lau Yee Chai.

WN: And did they all have liquor licenses?

SU: Yeah, they all have liquor license. Those days, draft beer only ten cents, twelve ounce. Ten cents.

WN: Was it easy to get liquor license?

SU: Yeah. Rum and coke, fifteen cents. And then, regular highball, all depend on the whiskey, twenty cents, twenty-five cents. Scotch and soda, thirty-five cents.

(Laughter)

SU: So cheap, eh? And then, regular beer, like Primo beer, ten cents one bottle. Miller High Life, twenty-five cents. Rainier beer, fifteen cents.

WN: This is all before the war prices?

SU: Yeah.

WU: What about during the war? Did you have to raise your prices at all?

SU: Yeah, we did raise the price. We jack 'em up right away. Nobody squawk, eh? At that time when the war started, I closed the door. And Christmas time come, I went down to police station, go get the permit to reopen the place. Just happen that at that time, Gabrielson was the chief. Okay, and then, Kennedy, Hoopai, Burns--you know, former Governor Burns--and who was the one more chief? I think was Larson or somebody. Anyway, I know most of them. So they gave me the permit. Christmas day, I open up.

Then I have to get the permit for them to go home nighttime, eh? Four o'clock, no alien allowed on the street, eh? So, I used to go down there and get the permit for my old man, another dishwasher, another cook. I got all those guys the pass. So when they show the pass, they can go home. But I told them not to take advantage, go out nighttime, just because you folks get the pass. Then, I opened till eight o'clock. Then I have to take them home. No more transportation, eh? So I take them home. Eight o'clock, by the time you clean up everything, about eight thirty, nine o'clock. But the fellas who stay neighbors, my neighbors, I make them clean up because fellas who stay down Kalihi, Palama, I used to take them home because far away, eh?

WN: Every night?

SU: Every night, every night. I did that for couple years, you know. I used to take the ladies home on Kam IV Road. Then, next day, I have to go to the bank. I only open about five to six hours a day. I used to bring in money, money, money.

WN: Because you knew the police, were you able to open earlier than the others?

SU: No, no, no, no. Five o'clock in the morning I open. I take care the defense workers. There used to be a lot of defense workers down at Waikīkī, eh? Come in the morning, when I serve them breakfast, if I serve breakfast, ham and egg, one kind. Only ham and egg today. Tomorrow, bacon and egg, all one kind. Sausage and egg. Hotcake. Of course, hotcake, you can get every morning. Hotcake, muffin, biscuit, we used to make our own, the baker. Then there's no such thing as you want to eat bacon and egg, when we get ham and egg. No, no, no. No more. We tell 'em, "No more." Just ham and egg. It's easy for us, eh? And then, we get all in a soup bowl. You know, the big soup bowl, eh? We crack the egg all inside. We line 'em up. We go like this, poom. Otherwise, they cannot.

WN: 'Cause was so busy?

SU: Yeah. Toast, same thing. Well, four-burner toaster, keep on going, keep on going. You want muffin, okay, so much. You want biscuit, so much. Those days, cheap. Hotcake, only ten cents. Three, this kind big one. Three pieces, only ten cents. Ten cents, cup of coffee. Second helping, five cents. (Laughs) So cheap.

WN: You said had lot of defense workers in Waikīkī . . .

SU: Oh, I had, especially in the morning and evening.

WN: You mean, they were working DeRussy?

SU: Pearl Harbor.

WN: Pearl Harbor? But they live Waikīkī?

SU: Yeah.

WN: Oh, I see.

SU: They deliver by the truck, eh? The truck driver, after they get pau eat in the morning, load 'em up, go. Same thing, defense workers, come home time. They don't even go home, you know. They stop by my place. Twenty, thirty guys come walk inside. And they order already before they go. We used to sell plenty of steak. Plenty steak. We finally know the face of those guys, defense workers, eh? So, we know already what they eat. So, sometimes, we run out with the steak. So, next day, I have to hustle. I go here

and there, pick up, and then slice some up, get ready for them to come. They work overtime, so you charge them. They never say a word. All they need is food, those guys. Thanksgiving time come, turkey, we used to roast about ten, fifteen. From night before, we roast. Otherwise, cannot keep up, eh? And we charge five, six dollars, serving. They don't say nothing. By the time they drink and everything, pay about seven dollars, eight dollars, they pay. The girls used to make lot of tips. Lot of girls used to make lot of tips.

WN: So, on holidays, did you open every holiday?

SU: Yeah, every holiday. Twenty-four hours, we open after that.

WN: You open Sunday, too?

SU: Sunday and everything. Saturday, Sunday was the best. So, Friday, Saturday, Sunday was the best. So, we started open longer hour, longer hour, longer hour. Finally, we open twenty-four hours.

WN: Oh, you mean, oh, the war, eh?

SU: Yeah. After two o'clock in the morning, we used to get Dairymen's milk deliver guys used to come around. Because myself [and] Barbecue [Inn] was the only place open, eh? Of course, you go to Bluebird, they don't have the full meal, eh? KC Drive Inn, they don't have a full meal, eh? But my place and Barbecue used to have full meal, so they used to come down.

WN: You were saying that on December 7, you had to go to your restaurant and board up the place, yeah? What else you had to do that day?

SU: Nothing I can do. All I have to do is to pick up the cash, close up the place. Nothing you can do. And some of the stuff that we have in the icebox, I have to go down there, use at home. Because going be rotten. No matter how long you put in the icebox. If the freezer, all right. But ordinary icebox, you cannot keep too long. Yeah, that time. So, I used to go in the morning, about couple hours, and fix up things, all this, everything. So I said, "I cannot do like this all the time." So I have to go get the permit to reopen the place. So Christmas time, we open. When we open, big sign down there, we open, ho. (Chuckles) Big mob came in. I have to tell all the girls, "Ey, certain-certain day we going open, so come work." (Chuckles) Oh, boy, I'm telling you, boy, not even funny. Not even funny, boy, I'm telling you. Everybody work hard.

WN: How many hours a day you used to work?

SU: At least sixteen hours.

WN: What was your typical day? What time you woke up?

SU: There's no time that I woke up and go to work or come home, sleep. Where slack time, sometimes I used to go inside of my car, go sleep. I used to park the car behind my restaurant underneath the tree. Sometimes, plenty mosquito, eh? Oh, boy. What a experience I get.

WN: What time did you wake up in the morning?

SU: Nine, ten o'clock, sometimes earlier. Doesn't make any sense. The reason why I have to wake up early in the morning, I have to go to the bank, get some change. Those days, twenty dollars, small money, you know. People get money, eh? They get lot of change. There's no such thing as dollar bill. Five dollar (chuckles), ten dollar, twenty dollars, all. And girls used to make lot of tips--twenty, thirty dollars a day. Yeah, no kidding. I know girls bought their house with their tips. And one of my girls get caught from Internal Revenue [Service]. The reason why she get caught, she made a trip. So, Internal Revenue said, "How did you make the trip?" So, she has to give up, eh? She told 'em. She pay 'em.

WN: How did you get from your house on Makano Lane to your restaurant?

SU: Oh, my car. I get my car, so I drive my car down there. Sometimes, I leave the car down the restaurant, walk, go home. It takes about five minutes. Not even five minutes, three minutes. I used to get Model-A. You know the Model-A, the Ford car. And then, I changed my car to this Pontiac. I made a little money, so I make change to a Pontiac. And then, Chevrolet. And then I changed to Dodge. After the Dodge, I get Ford panel wagon.

WN: You said, too, that your restaurant was right near the bus stop?

SU: Yeah. Right in front of my place there's a bus stop. Right in front of mine. That's why, nobody can park the car down [in front] there, eh? It's wide open. Then, after the war, I don't know what year was that, though--1946 or '47? Maybe later. The navy offer me to open a cafeteria down Ford Island. Me, I don't know those guys, you know. I don't know them, but they came. So, I told 'em, "What is the proposition?"

"The proposition is this and this."

"Okay, I'll take it. But it's going to cost me anything, though?" I said.

"No. All you do is supply the manpower and the food."

Food, I can buy from their commissary for Ford Island. What a bargain. So I told my brother Masaji. And couple days, I went down there. I told Masaji to go. He doesn't know about too much cooking. So he went down there. Of course, we hire a experienced cook. So we went down there, only lunch. We used to serve 6[00]

to 700 personnel [in] about three hours. Eleven o'clock we open; about two o'clock we close up. At first, all one time they used to come, you know.

So I tell 'em, "Chee, they all come one time, we cannot do nothing. So why don't you stagger the hour?" So they did. Eleven o'clock come, eleven thirty, you know, they stagger the hour. Then, we can take care. When they open the door, entrance, come inside, we get all the silverware--spoon, knife, fork, and everything--all down there, all lined up. And then, when they pick up that, they pick up the dishes. And then, you go to the counter. The cook pour in stew. We used to make about two different kind every day. Stew, and curry, or roast beef or something. Then, they go and pick up their own butter, pick up their own bread, everything, dessert. On one section they get girls down there watching. Coffee, they take their own coffee. They can have two times, three times, whatever they can drink. And then, they pay the cashier. They have to pass the cashier. When they get the dirty dishes, they bring to the dishwasher. I hire couple of these sailors, dishwashing. So, they [customers] never cheat me at all. They have to pass. And then, cashier. Because they get the navy guy watching. And then, when we cook the rice, big bowl, you know. We had a regular shovel, you know. Potato, same thing, too, you know.

WN: How long did you do this?

SU: Oh, couple years, though, we did that Ford Island. We made money. So, when we buy from commissary, we get everything from them. Only the vegetables we buy from Rancho Produce from River Street. That's the reason why I have my banana wagon, see? Load 'em up, we used to go. And then, before we go to Ford Island, we have to stop and catch the ferry. So there, they get MPs watching. So, MP have to check everything what we get, so I get wise already. When we go down in the morning, I used to bring pastry and coffee for the watchmen. I used to give them. They'll [let us] just pass. And then, wait for the ferry. Drive the car to the ferry, then go. And when we go the other side, do the same thing, too. So, come home time, I used to bring home egg, butter, you know, ham. And pass. The MP used to let me pass down there. So I had no trouble at all.

WN: I was wondering, your place in Waikīkī, did you have tourists come in to eat, too?

SU: Tourists, see, I cannot identify. I don't know, maybe, maybe not. I think the tourists used to come too, I think. Because we used to use a tablecloth during the evening time.

WN: Oh, only evening time?

SU: Yeah, evening time, we used to use tablecloth. Until pau at eight, nine o'clock. So we must have some tourists coming in, which I don't know. I cannot say, "You tourist" or "Not tourist," eh?

Maybe we used to have.

WN: So, in 1947, you had to move out because they had to extend the road, Ala Moana Road, from Kālia Road to Kalakaua [Avenue].

SU: Yeah, that's right.

WN: Tell me about it. What happened?

SU: After they put the road, I fought the government. You know, I put the case.

WN: You mean, this is after they built it or after they told you about it?

SU: I was there, yet. The road is behind, coming.

WN: When did you find out exactly when that they were going to do it?

SU: Oh, about six months or so, maybe earlier.

WN: How did you feel when you first found out?

SU: Oh, boy, I was sick like. . . . I was really sick. (Chuckles) So, I fought the case. My attorney used to be John Uyehara. John J. Uyehara. And then, we fought the case with jury. And no soap.

WN: So you were on Bishop Estate land?

SU: Yeah. I bought the place, you know, before that.

WN: Oh, you did buy it?

SU: Yeah, I bought the place, you know.

WN: From who? Bishop?

SU: Yeah. I think I bought it was \$50,000, I think, was. Something like that.

WN: When was this?

SU: Before nineteen thirty. . . . After the liquor, so maybe '35, '36, somewhere around there, anyway.

WN: Before the war, though?

SU: Yeah, yeah.

WN: For \$50,000?

SU: Yeah, \$50,000.

WN: So you bought, was fee simple?

SU: I borrowed the money from Bishop Bank, eh? Of course, I pay 'em back, everything. And I end up with \$87,500. That's what the jury gave to me.

WN: Oh, the settlement?

SU: (Chuckles) So, I didn't make money at all.

WN: Who condemned the land? The city?

SU: Well, city's supervisors, eh? Because that's when I find out, when they put the road through there, when I fought the government, and I went to the hearing. At the second meeting of the board of the supervisors--you know, at that time, they used to call board of supervisors [former name of the city council], eh? I went down there, two meetings, on my side, see. And the last one, today going to be the last one. So [John] Asing--you know, used to be named Asing, eh?--he turned around, so I lost. I lost the case.

WN: Oh, was by one vote?

SU: See, [Ben] Dillingham used to back me up. And Nick Teves, [Richard] Kageyama, and this Asing used to back me up. The rest of the three guys, [Milton] Beamer, and [Noble] Kauhane, and one more guy. Who was? I think was [Manuel] Pacheco, I think was that. Was [in favor of the road] coming through. So, when Asing turned around, I lost the case.

WN: You know why he turned around?

SU: Sure, because I no give this, eh? [SU reaches into his pocket.] If I was little bit old, I just underneath. (Chuckles) So I lost the case, so what I going do? I just gave up everything, close up the place. And then, I finally found a place down, I think, was year later. I found a place down Kapi'olani. That used to be printing shop, remember that?

WN: Kapi'olani near what street?

SU: On Kapi'olani.

WN: What part of Kapi'olani?

SU: Next to the, you know, the 1415 building, toward to Downtown side? I think was 14-something, that was, though.

WN: Did they give you reasons on why they had to extend Ala Moana [Road]?

SU: That I don't know. Maybe the traffic, eh? That supposed to go right straight to meet the Kūhiō Street, you know. Straight, supposed to be.

WN: Yeah?

SU: Yeah, originally. But I don't know, somehow, maybe the Chinaman behind--you know, that Chinese guy. He bought the property from amusement, eh? If I stay down there, I block the way, eh? But original supposed to go to line with Kūhiō, straight down. Cut DeRussy little bit, you know. That's how, you know. Because this fella, Harry Stroup, he used to help me. He was the reporter from the Honolulu Advertiser. I wonder if you know him.

WN: No.

SU: Harry Stroup. He used to help me. In one way, if Asing never turn around, I still stay down there. And I get piece of about 44,000 square foot down there, so I could sell or lease the place to some big hotel owner or whoever want to build the hotel or not. I be rich man today. (Chuckles)

WN: What would have been the alternative?

SU: I told them to find me a piece of property, same size as this place, on Kalakaua Avenue. At that time, could, you know, find. Can, you know. Because next door used to be only small shack building. The city and county can buy the shack down there and move me right next. Or, around the side of Ala Moana or something, around there. But no, they did not.

WN: So the city, the board of supervisors, when they voted, that was to vote for giving you a new place. The vote was not whether they're going to make the road continue?

SU: I was little bit too young that time. I was old enough, like now, different, eh?

WN: How old were you?

SU: Oh, I think thirty. . . . Let's see, I was only . . .

WN: Thirty-seven, yeah?

SU: Yeah, about.

WN: Yeah, that's young. (Chuckles)

SU: Young boy, that time.

WN: Who else had to move out because of this extension?

SU: Only me. Because no other building, no other nothing. Because

next door doesn't hit at all, eh? Just come by the edge by the road.

WN: Did DeRussy lose some of their land?

SU: I don't think so they lose. Maybe few feet or something like that, I think. Behind part, eh? The behind. Maybe few feet, I mean.

Nice. The place down there now really worth money, you know, on the ma uka side. Ma uka side get the what? Get one restaurant down there, eh?

WN: Ma uka side from your place, near Kūhiō?

SU: No, no, no, no. Toward to. . . . Get union hall down there?

WN: Oh, yeah. Unity House.

SU: Yeah. It's nice place down there, now, you know. They get one restaurant, that Spencecliff restaurant, eh?

WN: Oh, Tops?

SU: On corner, 'Ena Road and Ala Moana?

WN: Oh, Canterbury House [Tops Canterbury Coffee Shop and Pastry Shop]?

SU: I don't know what you call that, but . . .

WN: And Wailana [Coffee House].

SU: What they have on the corner of Kalākaua and Ala Moana now?

WN: Oh, there's Sizzler [Restaurant], I think. That's on the 'Ewa side.

SU: Yeah? Oh, that place, boy, nice place, now.

WN: So, in 1947 when you learned you had to move out, I mean, Waikīkī was starting to build up about then?

SU: Yeah, coming up, coming up. Gradually coming up. Coming up. That's why the Barbecue Inn remodeled the place, and somebody put service station down there now. There's a service station right now. What is it now? Old Barbecue?

WN: Gee, I don't know.

SU: And next to Barbecue, toward to Waikīkī side, that Kyo-ya Restaurant. Okay. And between Kyo-ya and Barbecue Inn used to have one bar down there, you know. Kyo-ya is on the border of Fort DeRussy, eh?

WN: Yeah.

SU: Okay? That place used to be owned by--you know, attorney Ernest Yamane? Well, those groups, eh? Those groups sold to Kyo-ya, see? So they made money. Ernest Yamane and who else was? Few more other guys.

WN: What did they have on there before Kyo-ya?

SU: Nothing. Open space. I think Yamane was a attorney for Kyo-ya, eh?

WN: I don't know.

SU: I don't know, but anyway, they sold to them; they made money.

WN: Did lot of others, like Barbecue Inn, what happened? Did they sell theirs, too, their land?

SU: Well, according to what I hear, that Joe Shikata, the father and mother used to own the place. Remember that?

WN: Yeah.

SU: And Joe Shikata, the son, just come back from school from Washington. He played football for Washington, eh? Then he managed the place. Of course, the mother died and the father died. And then, have too much good time, eh? So finally, he cannot pay the store bill and everything. So M. Otani just grabbed the place. So, finally, Otani grabbed the place. And then, I don't know whether Otani sold the place or what. That, I don't know. That was the last I hear. And right now, I cannot see, so I don't know whether it used to be service station or what. That, I don't know now.

WN: Yeah, I think there is a service station there. Texaco station.

SU: That place, that location, used to be good location, you know. Really good. And what happened to the old Lau Yee Chai now? Is there still Lau Yee Chai down there or hotel or what?

WN: No, I think it's Ambassador Hotel, I think is over there now.

SU: That place used to be big place, you know. You can hold quite a bit. Used to be lot of parties down there before, Lau Yee Chai. And what happened on the corner, they used to have a market down there? Piggly Wiggly?

WN: Yeah.

SU: What happened to Piggly? Still down there?

WN: What corner was that on?

SU: Kūhiō, Kalākaua.

WN: I think, now, is that Aoki, huh? The new Aoki Store [i.e., Aoki Mini Mart]?

SU: I don't know what. And toward to Waikīkī side used to have another service station. Remember that? Used to have service station.

WN: Who owned that?

SU: I don't know who owned. And then, next to that one, right now, there's a theater, eh? Kūhiō Theater or what?

WN: Yeah.

SU: It's still down there, yet?

WN: Yeah.

SU: And then, below that, used to be this Bluebird Cafe. And after that, I don't know. Because I cannot see, so I don't know after that. That's a good spot, though. Really good spot.

WN: At that time when you had to move out, lot of changes were going on in Waikīkī, eh?

SU: Yeah, but if the government try hard they could get the place. They could get the place right next to Sarashina Inn where they get the service station, and now they get the hotel down there, eh? Well, nothing but kiawe. They could get the place for me. And right across used to be nothing but kiawe tree. And then, after that, they clean up the place, make a skating rink, remember that? Skating rink. And right on the corner of McCully and Ala Wai they get one bakery, eh. Somebody made a bakery down there, drive-in bakery, eh? They could get the place for me. And toward to this Kalākaua on the corner, nothing. Now, somebody made bar. I don't know whether still get or not, but bar. And toward to the other side get buildings down there now, eh? Toward to Downtown side. And they used to get doughnut shop.

WN: So you wanted to stay in Waikīkī?

SU: Yeah, I wanted to stay because Waikīkī was a good place. Because I used to know all those people, hotel people. I used to get plenty customers from Moana Hotel, you know. All young boys. At Moana, Moana Seaside Hotel, Royal Hawaiian Hotel at that time. And Halekulani Hotel. And where else? That's about all hotel was.

WN: You mean, the employees used to come eat?

SU: Yeah. Used to come eat and used to come drink. If I stay down

there today, tsk, I don't know. I may lease the place all out, just take it easy. So I used to own football team. You know, barefoot football, eh? (Chuckles) And baseball team.

WN: Oh, you used to sponsor these teams?

SU: Yeah.

WN: Okay. Let me stop right here, okay?

SU: Yeah.

END OF INTERVIEW

Tape No. 13-69-3-86

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Sam Uyehara (SU)

March 17, 1986

Pauoa, O'ahu

BY: Warren Nishimoto (WN)

WN: This is an interview with Mr. Sam Uyehara on March 17, 1986 at his home in Pauoa, O'ahu. The interviewer is Warren Nishimoto.

Okay, Mr. Uyehara, you were forced to move out of Waikīkī, your Smile Cafe, in 1947?

SU: Mm hmm [Yes].

WN: Where did you move to?

SU: Moved to 1415 Kapi'olani Boulevard.

WN: Kapi'olani, near what street?

SU: Next to the, you know, that tall building [i.e., Ala Moana Building]. That Dillingham building, shopping center. Next to that, toward to Downtown side.

WN: So was it near the corner of Kapi'olani and Ke'eaumoku?

SU: Well, about a couple of lots toward to Downtown side.

WN: How did you get the property?

SU: Well, I didn't get the property. My brother got the property from, I think was Watkins Printing Shop, I think. Used to be printing shop down there, see. After we bought the place, I borrowed the money from American Security Bank. Mr. Mau, he loaned me money right away, see. And then, we fix up the place, and then we start business about year later or less than a year, I think. Until '62, I think was February, we close up the place because my eye give away, see. Until today.

WN: Was the new place bigger or smaller than the old place?

SU: It's almost double size. I had one room especially for this Press Club. You know, all the newspaper guys, Press Club, yeah?

Exclusive for them for use, with the soft chairs and everything. They can come in and out, anytime they feel like when we're open. I have party room. I can hold about 125 to 130, one big room down there with a small stage on with microphone and everything. And besides that, I have a regular dining room. Tables, about fifteen tables, plus the party room, Press Club, and bar. Bar can hold about fifteen stools and two, four, eight--about ten can sit down on the tables. About fifteen can sit down on the stools, see. One bartender.

WN: And you still had the Quarterback Club meeting?

SU: Yeah, I had Quarterback Club all the way through until I close up. Plus the Kālia Lions Club, which we hold at Japanese Chamber of Commerce at present on Beretania Street.

WN: You were a member of the Kālia Lions Club?

SU: Yeah, I'm a member of the Kālia Lions Club, charter member.

WN: Prior to the time you moved to Kapi'olani and you were still in Waikīkī, I understand you were active in sports promotions? Or sponsoring teams. How did that get started?

SU: Well (chuckles), I don't know how it started, but anyway, before the war, we started softball, fourteen-inch softball. Before the war, we started softball, and then plus, amateur baseball team was sponsored by City and County of Honolulu Park Board. And then, when the war started, we disband everything. Then around '46, we started--myself and few more other guys started--the AJA [Americans of Japanese Ancestry] baseball league at Makiki park. No, what do you call that Makiki park on Ke'eau-moku?

WN: Cartwright Field?

SU: Cartwright? I don't know, whatever. Anyway, we started down there one year, and then we shift that one to senior league and Ala Wai [field]. That's how we started, see. And then, that year I contact Hilo, Maui, Kaua'i, and we play. The following year, we play interisland series. When Honolulu hold about two, three, and then we told the members, "I think we should give even chance to the other islands to hold their tournament once a year." So, we went to Hilo, Maui, Kaua'i, and O'ahu. O'ahu have two times. And then, we go to the other islands. We gave them a chance to play. The reason why we hold at O'ahu because more revenue coming inside, eh?

WN: But prior to that, there was no AJA League?

SU: They have AJA League, but when the war started, they used to have a. . . . I don't know what they--they didn't call "AJA." They call "Japanese League," or something, you know. Like Mo'ilili'i, Pālama, Kalihi Koyo, Seibu, Nippon, and I think was Kaka'ako. I

was connected with Seibu ball club, which was owned by Mr. Ozaki. You know, Ozaki used to own the service station on Nu'uuanu Avenue. Next to the police station, anyway. I was the manager that time. Then war started, so we give away everything. Then after that, everything come down. We started the AJA League until today. But when I came (chuckles) blind, somebody took over.

So they came see me this year to help them out to make this AJA more colorful. So I told those guys. See, those guys, nobody want to work. They want money. I said, "You can't do that. You have to go volunteer to go out and hustle everything." See, when kick-off time, they have a party. But instead of calling the radio and newspaper, they just ignore that. That's why they don't get no publicity. Well, my time is different. The first thing I do is call the radio and newspaper guys, to ho'omalimali them, eh? Then you get all the publicity you want. And end of the year, you do the same thing again. That's why I get picture after picture. Like Star-Bulletin, Advertiser, Nippu Jiji, Hawai'i Hochi, all that. But today, young kids, no, they don't do those things. What they should do is give them the results of the day they play to the newspaper and the radio so they can broadcast over. The more they broadcast, the more people go listen, the more they going come out and they going get more support. Our days, we never used to say, "Go ahead and sell ticket." When we play at the stadium, we just announce, people used to come. Just imagine, we used to draw 4[,000] or 5,000, you know, at the stadium.

WN: The old stadium?

SU: Yeah.

WN: You had to be Japanese to play in the league?

SU: Well, at that time, yes. But since our days over, they start, I think, changing the policy that as long as the surname is Japanese, you can play, which is, I think, good idea. Because only Japanese boys alone, you cannot because there is lot of half-breed, eh? So, they get a chance to play, which was good idea, I think. Very good idea.

WN: Was there any team representing Waikīkī?

SU: Waikīkī? You mean right now?

WN: No. When you folks started?

SU: No. No, no, no.

WN: Kālia didn't have a team . . .

SU: No, no. Kālia didn't have a team. Not enough boys. See, at that time, when you stay in Kalihi, only Kalihi district guys play for Kalihi. Palama, Palama. Seibu is Liliha and part of Palama, and

all Nu'uano, all those guys. Nippon is Downtown guys, you know, Komeya [Hotel], River Street, all the places down there. And then, Mo'ili'ili, Mo'ili'ili, see. And then, Kaka'ako, Kaka'ako, see. At that time, there's no such thing as McCully or Wai'alaie or. . . .

WN: As owner of the restaurant, were you a sponsor for the teams?

SU: (Chuckles) Yeah, that's right. Sponsor basketball, football, baseball, softball, all those things.

WN: In other words, you paid for the entry fees and the uniforms . . .

SU: I pay all the entrance fees, everything. And then, after the season's over, I call all the boys and newspaper, give them a feast.

WN: At the restaurant?

SU: Yeah. (Chuckles) I think it's worth it, though. It's worth it. If I never get my eyesight bad, I still think still running it. (Laughs)

WN: Through this involvement in sports, that's how you got all your connections with sports figures?

SU: Yeah. That's right, that's right.

WN: How did that help your business?

SU: Very good. Very good. I don't have to worry anything about it. When myself and [Lawrence] "Peanuts" Kuniyoshi took the Red Sox baseball team over to Japan in 1951, we played against the non-pro and the University [of Hawai'i] team. We clean sweep win. We had a strong team that time. And then, I supposed to stay--myself and "Peanuts" supposed to stay--only one month, but we stay over than one month. Almost couple months. He stayed in different hotel, I stayed in different hotel. I contact all my friends down Tokyo. They used to pick me up, take me go here and there, all around the place.

WN: Today, who do you think is doing the kind of things that you used to do?

SU: Let's see, Angel Maehara quit. I think right now, used to be Columbia Inn, but Columbia Inn I don't think so they go that far, I think. Because my [former] customers went to Columbia Inn, you know, most of them.

WN: Oh, is that right?

SU: Yeah, because I used to get all the sports guys, eh? And then, when Columbia Inn opened next to Advertiser, I told Toshi

[Kaneshiro]--of course, he passed away already--I tell, "Go ahead and do it, that." So he followed me and he get all the sports guys down there, see.

WN: So, you were open on Kapi'olani, and then Columbia Inn opened later on?

SU: Yeah. Columbia Inn used to [be] located at Beretania and Maunakea, you know. Had one small lane inside there. What do you call that theater? That American Theater? Right in the corner. His small restaurant used to be. You remember that, eh?

WN: Ah, no.

SU: Small restaurant. And after they condemned the place, they moved to Kapi'olani at present time.

WN: So, all the customers went over to them when you closed [in 1962]?

SU: Most of them went over to them. I think still today they have guys who are going down there, but most of the old-timers already passed away, eh? "Red" McQueen, Don Watson, Andrew Mitsukado, Shimogaki, Bobby Lee, who else? [Dan] McGuire. Oh, most, I can name all those guys. And college boys, eh? Used to go down there. So, when I negotiate with stadium, I had a few shares in it, too, see. So, no questions asked--play. Yeah, too bad. They should remodel the place. You know, buy the property on Makahiki Way side and then behind. They should buy the property, and then build the stadium down there. That's a good location, that place down there.

WN: You mean, on the old stadium site?

SU: Old stadium, yeah. Because they get enough room on Makahiki side way, see? You push 'em back, and then on the Isenberg [Street] side, if you want to build the bleachers, you can build.

WN: What about parking, though?

SU: Parking, all they have to do is, behind, used to park the car double stacker. Because if they can spend--how much they spend at the new Aloha Stadium? About \$22 million, eh? Or \$21 million?

WN: I don't know. I think more than that.

SU: Oh, what--still today, lot of pilikia, eh? I don't see why they cannot do it. You know, don't have to be fancy kind of a parking stall. Just put 'em on. Don't have to be on the side.

WN: Okay. You know, you were living in Makanoe Lane, yeah?

SU: Mm hmm [Yes].

WN: When did you move out?

SU: In 1947, I think.

WN: You mean, the same year that you moved out of Smile Cafe, you moved out of . . .

SU: Yeah. I think so.

WN: Why did you move out of Makano Lane?

SU: My lease expired from Magoon. I told Magoon to give me a lease. He doesn't want to give me the lease. So I had a piece of property on Kapi'olani and I built the house for my brother Masaji, see. Then, well, we decided to go ahead and move over here anyway, so my father look around and he saw that--you know, the old Seaside Hotel down in Waikiki? He bought the old house, five-bedroom house. We moved that house to our place down on Kapi'olani. We patch 'em up, spend about twelve or thirteen grand to fix up everything, remodel everything, fix up just like new, and stay down there.

WN: That was one of the cottages of the Seaside Hotel?

SU: Yeah, yeah, yeah. You know, they used to get four, five cottages, eh? I bought from Imada, Richard Imada. I bought for \$2,250. Cheap, that time.

WN: How much did it cost to move the house?

SU: Chee, I forget already, though. [Frank] Fasi [who was a surplus dealer at the time] moved the house. I forget already. Didn't cost too much, though. Didn't cost too much.

WN: You mean, when the Royal Hawaiian Hotel was built where Seaside Hotel is . . .

SU: No, no, no, no. You know where this Princess Ka'iulani [Hotel]? Right across from Moana Hotel, eh? That's where they used to be.

WN: Oh, oh. That's the Moana Hotel employee cottages?

SU: Yeah, yeah, yeah. You know, they used to get lined up, two side, both sides, eh? Yeah. Was damn good house, double-wall house, you know. Damn good house was, boy. Yeah.

WN: Anybody could buy those Moana cottages?

SU: Yeah. I think they sold everything, I think. Some went down to Nanakuli side, too. Yeah. All double-wall, you know. Outside, one by twelve, smooth one by twelve. Inside, all plastic kind wall. Double-wall. Good and tough building was.

WN: Why didn't Magoon renew your lease?

SU: Well, I don't know that. I told Magoon, "You give me lease,

thirty-five, forty-year lease, I promise you that I going to build nice house." But no. Instead of doing that, he say no. Well, maybe he had a intention to go ahead and lease it out to the Mainland guys, eh? Put big hotel or apartment or something like that, see. So, he didn't give me. I paid ten dollars a month only, lease. But those days, ten dollars a month, big money, you know.

WN: What about the others, your neighbors like that? They have to move out, too?

SU: They all have to move out. Every one of them. Before I move out, let's see, Kitagawa, Matsumori, Yokota, Kawata, Kaneshiro, Takara, all those guys, they move out. Aoki, all those guys, they moved out, one by one. See, the moment they move out, they knock 'em off, see. So, I had to move too, see.

WN: So as soon as your lease expired, then you folks moved?

SU: Yeah. If they gave me another thirty-five or forty years, I'd be staying down there, yet.

WN: What did you like about Makano Lane?

SU: Well, the neighbors was good, no? Even though they get Hawaiians, but they was really nice people, though. Call them. . . . Of course, there's (chuckles) one drunken guy. Every time drunk, raise hell every time, but he don't harm nobody. (Chuckles) They used to have few Hawaiians. But the neighbors was really nice.

WN: So you moved out about 1947, around that time. How did you feel about moving out?

SU: Well, you can't help it. I don't like to. Because once you stay in one place, you don't want to move, eh? But things go that way, so I have to move out. When I first went to Kapi'olani, on my side on the Downtown side, big pukas everything, kiawe trees. And then, next door, same thing, kiawe trees, all those things. I was going to buy the piece of property toward to Downtown side, 14,000 square foot, two lots down there, with all holes and everything, kiawe and everything. So my mother told me, "For what you want to buy that kind of junk place? Going to cost you money."

I tell, "No, that's okay. We can cut down the kiawe tree and then put sign down there, "Fill in. Throw rubbish."

She didn't like it but afterwards, she say, "Yeah, might as well buy." But too late. So, Chinese people bought the place. They fill in, they put up apartment houses, they rent 'em out. Fourteen thousand square foot, two lots.

WN: When you think about Waikiki today compared to the days when you lived there and had your restaurant over there, how do you feel?

What's the difference?

SU: Today, of course, I cannot see, but according to what I hear from my friends, terrific. You know, all the stores, and buildings, everything. Change, eh? Just like right across from my place, used to have service station. I wonder if still have a service station or not, but I think still have it, service station. And Mitchell's Malt Shop. And then right on the McCully and Kapi'olani corner used to have Sarashina Inn eating place. They get hotel, everything down there, now, eh? All been changed. And behind there, no more kiawe, no more nothing. All houses, apartment houses, everything. And where else? Kuhio Avenue, all houses, everything. Used to be nothing but kiawe tree. Kiawe and saboten.

WN: What is that?

SU: Saboten is big leaf like that with lot of thorns on (and red flowers). Yeah. I don't know what they call in English, though, that. Big difference.

WN: Now, Waikīkī is lot of tourists, huh, over there.

SU: Oh, nothing but tourists.

WN: How do you feel about the emphasis now on tourism in our economy?

SU: I think people should take care more tourists, though, I think. They should take care. I think Honolulu can improve some more other places where tourists can go, though. Like Hanauma Bay, and Blowhole, and where is the place down there they get dancing? Way up down the countryside? La'ie [Polynesian Cultural Center]. And Nu'uanu Pali. I think they can improve the places, though. Where else can you think of it?

WN: People have some different feelings about Waikīkī. Some people don't like it.

SU: But too crowded. Too crowded. That's why they was talking about making a convention hall on the Fort DeRussy's empty place, eh? Well, there's two ways of looking at it. When you make convention, of course, lot of people going to stay down Waikīkī hotels. They can walk and go without using the transportation. But when you go far away, you have to use the transportation, and then congestion of the roads, eh? So you can look two ways. To me, no difference anyway. (Chuckles) They were talking about taking the golf course, eh? Making the convention hall down there.

WN: Oh, Ala Wai Golf Course?

SU: Yeah. If they ever do that, those guys going be in lot of trouble, though. Oh, lot of trouble. Because the old folks, that's the only place they can go, see. Because, sure, they have a lot of places in countryside, but that's too far away. They cannot drive

the car. I know friend of mine goes every day, I hear. Every day in the morning, except couple days a week which you cannot go to reserve the--you know, regular members, eh? I wonder if you know this fella, Kenso Noshida?

WN: What's his name?

SU: Kenso Noshida?

WN: No, I don't know.

SU: Oh, he died about four, five years ago. He used to go down there every day. He's a good golfer. He's a small guy, but he's a good golfer. I think he was about the first one who play pro baseball in Pacific Coast League. Yeah, Sacramento. And after he retired, he come back and work for Athletic--I wonder if they still have Athletic Supply or not, but he worked for Athletic Supply. And after retire, he goes to Ala Wai Golf Course every day. Play nine holes every day. And then, few more other guys will do down there every day, go play golf. I went golf course about three, four times way up down Palolo. Used to have Palolo, a nine hole, eh? Yeah. Myself, Dr. Kometani, Alan Nagata, Kusunoki, Perry Tanaka, and who else? We went. (Chuckles) I think about four times, me, I went. But haven't got the time.

You know, when you work restaurant, you don't get time like lot of guys, you know. Restaurant work, you got to put your time inside, otherwise you're not going to make money. People sleeping, you got to get up in the morning, you got to go down there, work. Like [my] next neighbor, behind, he leave here 1:30 in the morning, 2:00 in the morning. He have to make okazu, everything, eh? He have his shop down Kaimukī where the Times Supermarket, right there. So, when working people go to work, have to make bento, eh? Six o'clock in the morning. You have to, because everything be ready. If you don't put the time inside yourself and hire somebody else, you not going to make money. You're not going to make money. So they get through about two o'clock, come home. Next morning, go back again. So, they rest Sunday and Monday. And then, when they take vacation, they take vacation about one month. I don't blame them. You know, go early in the morning. Usually two o'clock, but that's tiresome, every day, every day, every day.

WN: You used to take vacation?

SU: Never take vacation. The only time vacation was, I used to sneak out, "Hey, I going the other island. I won't be back till three, four days." (Laughs) Yeah. So, I used to give them excuse when they have interisland series baseball, eh? Just sneak away. Instead of going down there couple nights, I used to stay down there one week with my friend down there. Because I have a cousin down in Hilo, see. And Maui, good friend, "Iron" Maehara. And then, on Kaua'i, I get Harry Shiramizu's brother, Joe Shiramizu, the sports writer. And Shintani, overseer man down Kōloa

Plantation and all that. And then, Mr. Ishii used to be police commissioner down there, see. And Ota, the hotel owner, Lihu'e, see. That's the only excuse I give. (Chuckles)

WN: Okay, Mr. Uyehara, I'm going to turn off the tape recorder, and I want to thank you very much for . . .

SU: Oh, thank you very much.

WN: Thank you.

END OF INTERVIEW

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